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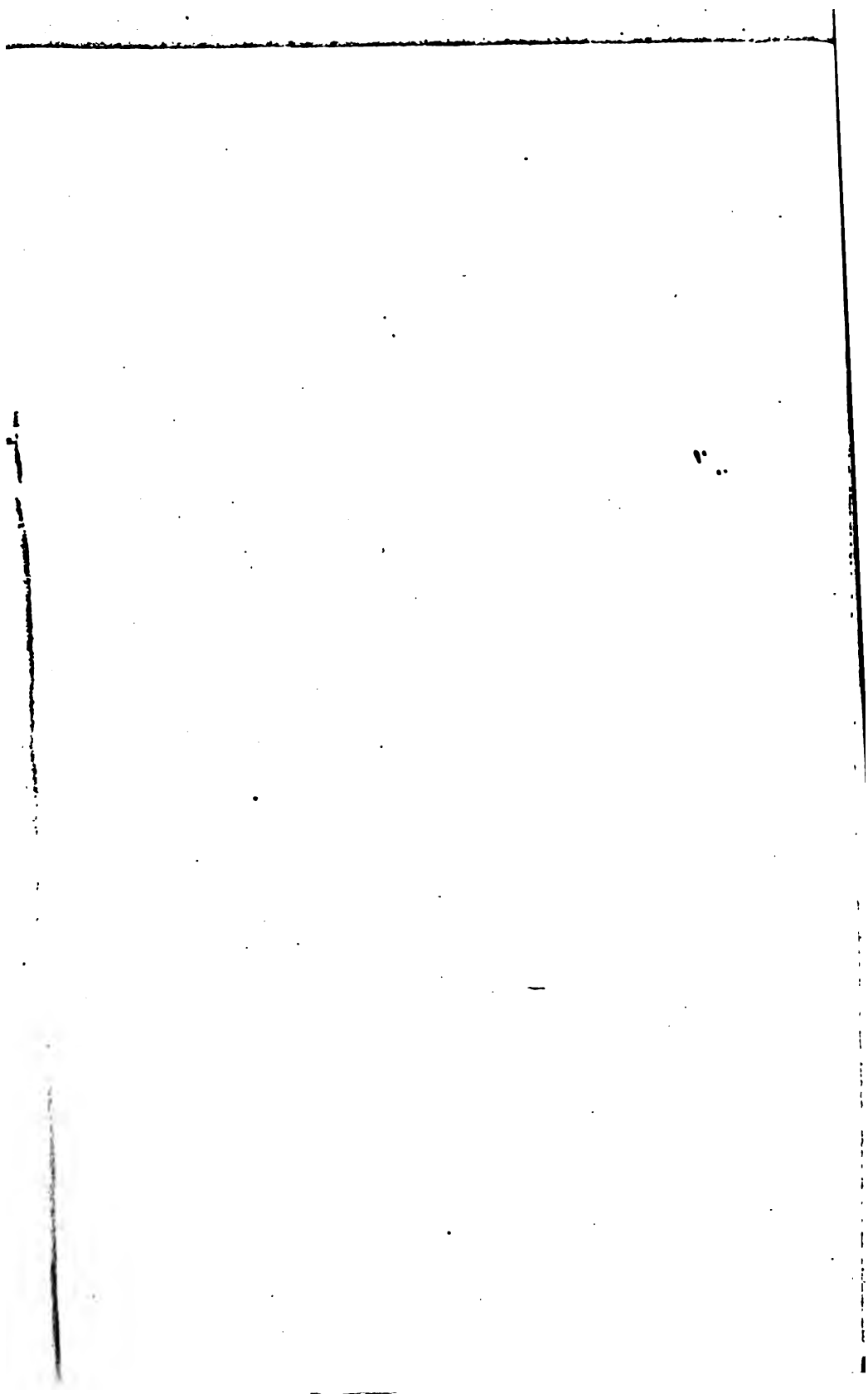
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JOSEPH STURGE.

BORN AUGUST 2, 1798. DIED MAY 16, 1859.

Photographed by W. H. Selgfield from a Drawing by W. Willis.

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MEMOIRS
OF
JOSEPH STURGE.

BY
HENRY RICHARD.



ELBERTON. THE BIRTHPLACE OF JOSEPH STURGE.

"I"

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LONDON:
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PREFACE.

THE writer of the following work is by no means convinced that it is an unmixed advantage for the memoirs of an individual to be published very speedily after his death, especially if he were one who had taken any prominent part in connection with public affairs. Still, for the sake of others who may think differently, he cannot but regret the delay that has occurred in the appearance of this volume. But there were many reasons why it was out of his power to accomplish his task sooner. He was so placed that he could only work at it by snatches, in the intervals of official duties always exigent, and sometimes very urgent, which it was impossible for him to pretermitt. The work itself, also, proved a much more serious one than he anticipated, when he first acceded to the request with which the family of Joseph Sturge honoured him, to prepare some memorial of the life and labours of his revered and beloved friend. Mr. Sturge was a man whose sympathies were so broad, and whose activities were so varied, that to tell intelligibly the story of his life it was necessary to understand something of most of the leading public events of the last thirty or forty years. Then the materials which came into the writer's hands, out of which to construct the work, were formidable both

in bulk and quality. He had to read through a correspondence carried on by Mr. Sturge with all sorts of persons, on a great diversity of subjects, extending to between three and four thousand letters, some of them very lengthy, and not a few written in characters almost as difficult to decipher as the Egyptian hieroglyphics. But besides letters there was a large number of other documents and records, including diaries, reports of societies, minutes of committees, pamphlets, newspapers, &c., many of them, indeed, yielding little that was profitable for his purpose, could he only have known their contents without reading them, but none the less consuming a large amount of time in the examination. His labour was, moreover, all the greater because he was determined to restrict the work to one volume, whereas it would have been much easier to have made it two or three. Taking all this into account, he hopes any of Mr. Sturge's friends who may have grown impatient with him will acknowledge that he is entitled to some indulgence for the delay, as well as to some credit for the forbearance with which he has used the mass of materials placed at his disposal.

The author is under obligations to many friends who have assisted him in his work. And first he has a melancholy pleasure in acknowledging the generous kindness of the late Mr. Thomas Pumphrey, who, when he had prepared a valuable paper called 'Brief Recollections of Joseph Sturge,' which he was urged by many to publish, preferred, rather than detract from, by anticipating, any interest supposed to attach to the forthcoming Memoir, to place his production in the hands of the biographer, with full liberty to make any

use of it he might think proper. Of this permission it will be seen he has liberally availed himself, especially in the early part of the volume. It is not without a keen pang of regret he reflects that the book itself will never meet the eye of one who would have opened it with so much of interest and sympathy. But long before it was ready for the press, Mr. Pumphrey had himself passed away to join his friend

'In the blest kingdom meek of Joy and Love.'

To Mr. Robert Charleton of Bristol, Mr. Walter Sturge of the same city, Mr. William White of Birmingham, and the Rev. John Clark of Jamaica, the author begs to express his grateful acknowledgments for important contributions bearing upon different portions of Mr. Sturge's life. The privilege of constant communication with his friend Mr. Joseph Cooper has also been of great value to him, a gentleman whose own labours in the fields of philanthropy have been abundant and long continued. Mr. William Morgan of Birmingham has been most kindly and perseveringly helpful to the biographer, permitting him to draw at will out of his ample stores of information, in reference to most of the public enterprises in which Mr. Sturge was engaged, and in many of which he was his efficient and constant helper. Above all, however, is the author indebted to Mr. Thomas Harvey of Leeds. He cannot express here half of what he feels as to the extent of his obligations to this dear friend, not for material help only, though that has been ample and most important, but for the warm interest, the wise counsel, the delicate sympathy, the generous encouragement, with which he

has sustained and cheered him through the whole undertaking.

The labour of preparing this volume has not been without a rich reward, for it has brought the author into yet more intimate acquaintance than he had before with one of the most beautiful characters, one of the most unselfish lives, he has ever known. There is one expression that has accompanied him through all his labours, haunting his mind like some favourite musical refrain, an expression which might indeed be made the running headline for the whole of this volume—'*He lived not unto himself.*' In examining the hundreds of Mr. Sturge's letters that have passed under his eye, nothing has struck him so forcibly as this—how little they contain about Mr. Sturge; how rare are the allusions to himself, to his own circumstances, his own business, his own health, his own feelings, and even his own labours. He talked very little *about* even the work he was doing, not from any constrained or intentional reticence, but from simple unconsciousness that he was doing anything deserving or requiring to be talked about. His life was indeed a life devoted with rare singleness of purpose to the good of others and the glory of God.

The biographer hardly dares hope that he has succeeded in commemorating that life in a manner at all worthy of its singular excellence. All he can say is, that if he has failed, it has not been through want of either love or labour,

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MEMOIRS OF JOSEPH STURGE.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS.

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THOSE who have passed over the road leading from Bristol to Gloucester will not readily forget the scene that breaks on their view as they gain the top of Almondsbury Hill; for there, spread out before the eye, lies one of the finest landscapes in England, embracing an area of upwards of a hundred square miles, and stretching in an unbroken sweep from the mouth of the Severn to the Forest of Dean, and almost within sight of the smoke of Gloucester. Immediately below

is a large district of fertile land, locally known as the 'Marsh' or 'Lower Level,' richly wooded, principally with elm trees, and extending to the banks of the Severn, which appears like a silver line in the distance. Still looking straight before you, you see the tubular bridge that spans the Wye near Chepstow, and a little below, the spot where that river is absorbed in its larger sister-stream; you then catch a glimpse of Piercefield and the Wyndcliff, while the bold outlines of the Welsh hills form a fitting background to the whole scene. Turning to the left, you can follow the course of the Severn from Portishead Point past the Swash, where the river Avon empties itself into the estuary, up to Aust Cliff, behind which it is hidden for a while, but it reappears again on the right, and may be traced as far as Lydney. Nearer to you on the right, and lying between Aust Cliff and the heights of Old Down, is a rich tract of country, where the edge of the mountain limestone touches the alluvial deposit from the estuary of the Severn. Scattered along this strip of land you can see, though in the spring almost buried in the bloom of orchards, the beautiful rural villages of Tockington, Olveston, and Elberton, the last of which was the birthplace of Joseph Sturge.

In this district, or its immediate neighbourhood, the family of the Sturges had been settled for many generations, either as substantial farmers or as yeomen cultivating their own land. The first of the name of whom there is any distinct record was Thomas Sturge, who lived at Frampton Cotterell in the reign of James I. His son Joseph was the lessee of an estate at Gaunt Earthcott, still in the same vicinity, under the corporation of Bristol, and died about the year 1669. He seems to have joined the Society of Friends almost

from its first appearance. George Fox himself had evidently laboured in that part of Gloucestershire, and in his journal he records a visit he paid to Olveston (which he writes Oldstone) on a very interesting occasion in his life, namely, immediately after his marriage at Bristol with Margaret Fell, the widow of Judge Fell. 'We stayed,' he says, 'about a week in Bristol, and then went together to Oldstone, where, taking leave of each other in the Lord, we parted, betaking ourselves to our several services, Margaret returning homewards to the North, and I passing on in the work of the Lord as before.'* The extraordinary success which attended the ministrations of that remarkable man is a very noteworthy fact in the history of those times. Before his death his disciples might be counted by scores of thousands, scattered over most parts of the kingdom. In some instances, nearly whole neighbourhoods seem to have become converts to the new faith. That such was the case in the neighbourhood where the Sturges lived, is rendered very probable by two facts. First, that at the Friends' burial-place, called Hazel, distant about two miles and a half from Olveston, 1,000 burials are recorded to have taken place between 1650 and 1700, which, in such a sparsely populated district, must have formed a large proportion of those who died in that interval. This is confirmed by the second fact, that, when William Penn went out to America to found the colony of Pennsylvania, he took with him a considerable number of families—as many as forty, if we may trust the local tradition—from these villages and the adjacent country.

It is certain, at any rate, that the Sturges can trace

* Journal of George Fox, ii. p. 70.

their descent through a line of 'Friends,' going back almost, if not quite, to the origin of the Society.

Joseph, the subject of this memoir, was born on August 2, 1793, at an old house called the Manor House, which, both from its name and appearance, we may infer to have been at one time a place of considerable dignity, though used now only as a farmhouse. He was the fourth child and second son of Joseph and Mary Sturge, to whom were born twelve children, eleven of whom lived to attain middle age. He was the sixth of the family who in succession had borne the name of Joseph, the first of whom was the early disciple of George Fox, already mentioned, who died in 1669. His father was a respectable farmer and grazier 'of intelligence,' we are told, 'considerably superior to men of the same class at that time.' His mother was Mary Marshall, the daughter of Thomas Marshall of Alcester, in Warwickshire. She appears to have been a lady of a very gentle, retiring disposition, but probably all the more on that account, as is frequently the case with women of that quiet character, exercising a strong, abiding influence over the minds and hearts of her children.

The family of the Marshalls was originally from Little Tew, in Oxfordshire. One of that name, Ralph Marshall, and supposed to be a lineal ancestor of Thomas, was married in 1645 to Anne Hacker, sister to Colonel Hacker, one of the Commonwealth officers, who commanded the troops at the execution of Charles I. The same Ralph was also, it is believed, closely related to the celebrated Stephen Marshall, the Presbyterian clergyman, who was associated with Calamy and others in the strenuous controversy carried on in those times between the Prelatists and Puritans. He formed one of

'the five Smectynni,' as they were called from the title of a book, very famous in its day, in reply to a work of Bishop Hall in defence of episcopacy and liturgy, which book purported to have been 'written by Smectymnuus,' a word which was composed of the initials of the authors' names, who were Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Mathew Newcomen, and William Spurstowe.* The family of the Marshalls, like that of the Sturges, had united themselves very early with the Society of Friends. In some curious memoranda in an old Bible still extant, we are told of the grandfather and grandmother of the Thomas Marshall of Alcester, already mentioned, that 'they were early of the principles of the people called Quakers, and brought up their children in that persuasion.'

That this descent of Joseph Sturge from a long line of Quaker ancestry was a powerful element in the formation of his character, we cannot doubt. It is not resemblances of form and feature merely that are transmitted from one generation to another. But moral and intellectual affinities are also, to a large extent, hereditary. The early history of the Friends is the record of a lengthened martyrdom, and the traditions of the Society no doubt contribute to create and foster a quiet but indomitable resistance to oppression, while its religious system inculcates the broadest philanthropy, irrespective of nation, class, or colour. At the time of Joseph Sturge's childhood, there appears to have been a deficiency in Friends' families of direct religious instruction, but they were, nevertheless, pervaded by an atmosphere of religious influence. Tenderness of conscience and obedience to the divine will

* Jordan's *Parochial History of Enstone*, p. 305; Brook's *Lives of the Puritans*, iii. 245.

were carefully cherished. Many opinions and customs of great authority in society at large were of little or none within that secluded pale, and the habit of proceeding in the right line of duty, without regard to consequences, was by precept and example earnestly and habitually enforced upon the young. There is little, of course, to say of his early childhood, which was, no doubt, much like that of other children. He is described as having been a 'very healthy and lively infant, whom it was a pleasure to nurse.' By the favour of Providence, the circumstances in which the young life began to unfold itself were kindly and propitious. His parents, possessed of modest but sufficient means, and marked by their moderation and tranquillity of character,

'Along the cool sequestered vale of life
Kept on the noiseless tenour of their way.'

Their home was the abode of cheerfulness and contentment. He grew up also as one of a numerous family of children, among whom were several sisters, some considerably older, and some about his own age—an inestimable blessing to a boy. In such a secluded district there was small need to restrain them from roaming at will through the meadows, and among the orchards, and over the downs, which give so much of quiet beauty to that part of the country. They lived, therefore, we are told, very much in the open air, and grew rather wild, though the wildness was of a harmless sort. There is one little anecdote of these early years which he was himself accustomed to recite with great glee for the amusement of his children, and which shows considerable quickness of repartee on the part of a child so young.

When about six years old he was on a visit to a

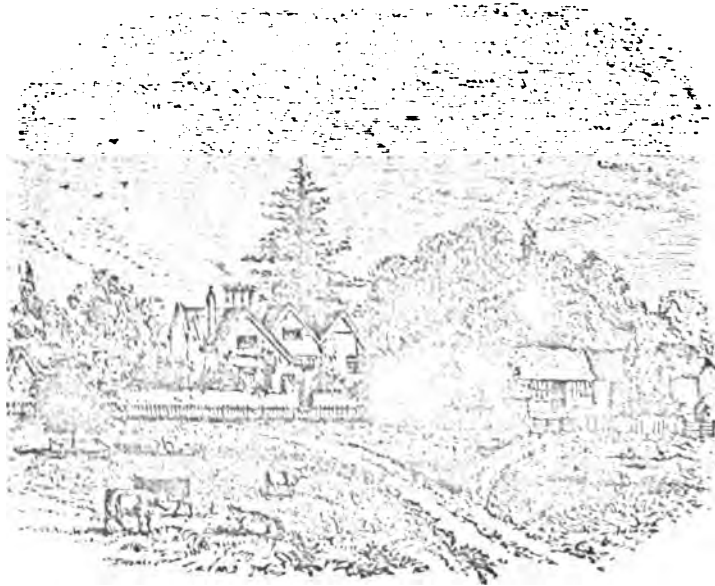
friend of his mother at Frenchay, near Bristol. Sauntering about one day, he came near the house of an eccentric old man belonging to the Society of Friends, who, among other troubles of life, was sorely annoyed by the depredations of a neighbour's pigs. Half in jest and half in earnest, perhaps, he told Joseph to drive the pigs into a pond close by. The boy, delighted with the fun, went to work with a will. But presently a woman, the owner of the pigs, rushed out of an adjoining house with a broom in her hand, which she flourished in great wrath over his head. The tempter, who was still standing by, in order to cover his own share in the transaction, shook his head at the little culprit, and said gravely,

‘Ah! Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.’

The child looked up at him indignantly, and said, ‘*Thee* be’st Satan, then, for thee told me to do it.’

When he was about seven years old, Joseph went on a long visit to his grandfather Marshall, who lived at a farm called Kingley, near Alcester. This gentleman had lost his wife when he was comparatively a young man, and as Mrs. Sturge was his only child, he generally had one or more of his grandchildren to live with him, among whom Joseph seems to have been the favourite. In a letter to the biographer from Mr. Thomas Sturge, Joseph’s eldest brother, the grandfather is described as ‘a plain farmer-like man, with little education, but possessed of a good understanding, a most amiable and affectionate disposition, and of the strictest integrity. He was held in great esteem by all his neighbours, and almost revered by his servants and workpeople. His mode of living, like that of most farmers in those days, was very homely; himself, his two nieces, and grand-

children, with male and female servants, took their meals together at a long oak table in the kitchen, the family at the upper end, the servants at the other; and on winter evenings all assembled in or around the large kitchen fire-place, the women working, and my grandfather relating general, political, or family anecdotes, or at other times all listening to some suitable reading by a niece or grandchild; but no approach to impropriety of language or conduct was ever permitted.'



KINGLEY.

In this primitive household the boy spent several years of his early childhood, under conditions that must have been pleasant and genial to the child-nature, and contributed greatly, no doubt, to the healthy development both of body and mind. His grandfather's house

was situated on a slight elevation on the way between Evesham and Alcester, at an equal distance from the latter place and the village of Wicksford, interesting to the lovers of literature as the scene of a tradition—though, according to Mr. Knight, a fabulous tradition—connected with the early life of Shakespeare.*

It commanded an extensive view of the fertile valley of Alcester, through which the river Arrow flowed, and which was bounded by the Cotswold hills. The farm was conterminous with the fine wooded park of Lord Hertford, whose seat of Ragley was about a mile distant from Kingley. Amid these scenes of rural beauty, the little lad was permitted to roam with almost unlimited liberty, spending whole days nut-gathering and birds'-nesting, for which latter employment he had a great passion. In a brief sketch of his life which he

* The story is to this effect:—Bidford, a village on the banks of the Avon, was the rendezvous of a fraternity of hard drinkers, who were wont to assemble there from all the surrounding villages, including Wicksford, and who were called the Topers and the Sippers. A party of young men from Stratford, among whom was Shakespeare, jealous of the 'bad eminence' which these Bacchanalian villagers had acquired, resolved to put their skill to the test, and for that purpose repaired to Bidford one Whit-Monday. But though they encountered only the Sippers, the least potent section of the drinkers, the Stratforders found themselves no match for those seasoned vessels. In returning home, Shakespeare was so overpowered with drink that he was obliged to spend the night under a crab-tree, known afterwards as Shakespeare's tree. On being invited next morning by some of his boon companions to renew the contest, he refused, and said, 'I have drank enough with

Piping Pebworth, dancing Marston,
 Haunted Hillborough, hungry Grafton,
 Dudging Exhall, Papist Wicksford,
 Beggarly Broom, and drunken Bidford.'

Though Mr. Knight ascribes these verses to 'some old-resident who had the talent of rhyme,' he adds, 'It is remarkable how familiar all the country people are to this day with these lines, and how invariably they ascribe them to Shakespeare.'

wrote when he was, about nineteen years old, he says in reference to this period—

‘I continued with my grandfather nearly three years, having generally one of my brothers or sisters with me. There I employed myself almost as I pleased, being seldom contradicted. In the summer I was almost wholly occupied in birds’-nesting, which I followed with great avidity. When I saw a nest I was not deterred from getting it by thorns or briers, or anything else, neither did I mind tearing both my skin and clothes in attaining my object—the latter of which, though generally made of strong materials, I used soon to tear to pieces; and I believe I was mostly a very slovenly figure. But this I did not care for, so long as I obtained the birds’ eggs, which, when I had got, I made no other use of than to blow the yolks out, and string them on a thread to hang up and look at, unmindful of the pain I was giving to the innocent owners of the nests I was robbing. Whether the fondness of children for this amusement arises from thoughtlessness or native cruelty of disposition, I cannot say, but for the honour of human nature I should hope the former.’

He took great delight, also, in accompanying his grandfather when he went out fishing in the little river that flowed below the house, or shooting in the neighbouring woods, which abounded with game. ‘He generally used to put me,’ he relates, ‘to beat through the wood at some distance from him; but no sooner did I hear the report of the gun, than I dashed through thick and thin towards him, vociferating, “What has’t shot, what has’t shot?”’

He is described by his eldest brother, Mr. Thomas Sturge, who was sometimes with him at Kingley, as being at this time a singularly active enterprising boy, endowed with exuberant animal spirits, and a most fearless temper, climbing up trees, and plunging headlong into the hedges and underwood in pursuit of his

objects, reckless, as he himself says, about his clothing, which often hung in tatters about him, to the great discomposure of a worthy woman who served in the capacity of a housekeeper to his grandfather. On one occasion she brought the young delinquent before the latter, pointing in despair to a new garment, which had been brought back from the woods rent from top to bottom. 'Ah! Joseph, Joseph,' exclaimed the old gentleman, with a mock gravity, 'we must make thee a pair of tin-breeches, and then all the children in the village will exclaim, "Here comes the boy with the tin-breeches."' Little or no attempt was made, during his sojourn with his grandfather, to teach him anything beyond what he could learn by communion with nature, in the woods and fields and by the river-sides, and from intercourse with the worthy old patriarch and his simple household. But he was placed in circumstances eminently favourable to the hardy growth of his physical nature, and for laying the foundation of that robust bodily constitution which stood him in such excellent stead afterwards amid the toils and labours of the life of incessant activity to which he was destined.

Two or three years before his death, he took his own children to Kingley to show them the spot where their father had spent so much of his childhood. Out of that there grew a little incident which strikingly illustrates the tenderness of conscience for which he was remarkable through life. As he passed through the familiar scenes of his early days, amid the crowd of pensive and tender associations that, no doubt, thronged through his mind, there was one of a painful nature, because connected with an act of childish wrong-doing. Walking through the village of Wicksford, already referred to, in company with Mr. Joseph Bayzand, the present occu-

pant of Kingley, they came to a little public-house, dignified with the name of the 'Fish Inn,' at the sight of which there flashed through his memory the fact that, nearly sixty years before, he and a servant-boy of his grandfather's had obtained from the landlady of the house a change in copper for a sixpenny-piece, which they knew to be bad. Trivial as many would be disposed to regard such an offence, Joseph Sturge could not rest satisfied until he had made what atonement he could for this sin of his youth. Accordingly on his return to Birmingham he wrote the following letter to Mr. Bayzand :—

'ESTEEMED FRIEND,—The kind attention I received from thee when calling at Kingley with some of my family the summer before last has often inclined me to write thee a few lines on a matter which, though it may appear a trifle, has, whenever it has passed across my memory, caused me uneasiness. It is now, I believe, nearer sixty than fifty years ago (at the age of about nine years, I think) I was guilty, in conjunction with one of my grandfather's servant boys, of defrauding the landlady of the Fish Inn at Wicksford (Mrs. Haynes) of sixpence, by getting change in copper for a sixpenny piece which we knew not to be a good one. How far I was led into it by the servant boy, who was older than I, I cannot tell, but it would be a satisfaction to me to pay two hundredfold, say 5*l.*, to such relatives of the Mrs. Haynes we acted so unjustly to as, were she living, she would most wish to assist, if thou could'st kindly put me in the way of doing so. From the inquiry I made when with thee at Wicksford, and which thou wilt see was not altogether dictated by curiosity, I think I understood there was no direct descendant of Mrs. Haynes living; but if thou think'st the money can be satisfactorily appropriated, please to let me know. But perhaps there will be no advantage in letting my motive for giving it be known beyond thyself, though I have no strong

objection to it, if it is thought best. Hoping thou wilt excuse a stranger for giving thee so much trouble,'

'I am, very respectfully,

'Thy obliged friend,

'JOSEPH STURGE.'

The inquisition was accordingly made, and it was discovered that there *was* a granddaughter of Mrs. Haynes living in Wicksford, with a large family, in no very flourishing circumstances, to whom the 5*l.* was given, and proved no doubt a very welcome boon.

Lest anyone, however, should imagine that he looked back with anything like morose or morbid feeling to his childhood's days, let us mention another anecdote told us by Mr. Bayzand, connected with this visit to Kingley. At the back of the house there is still extant the small room in which he was accustomed to sleep as a boy. On seeing this, he described with great glee a trick he was wont to play on the old grandfather. In the garden behind the house there was a long row of cherry trees. It was the duty of Joseph in the fruit-season to scare the birds from the fruit, by ringing a bell that had been hung up among the trees. But as these winged pilferers are known to be very early risers, it was necessary that he should turn out of bed almost with the first flush of dawn. This did not quite suit little Joseph's inclinations; and therefore, as a compromise between conscience and convenience, he contrived to attach a long string to the bell-pull, which he brought into his bed-room, so that he might ring the bell from bed, while the tinkle of it satisfied the old gentleman that the watcher was at his post.

When he was ten years of age he returned home; his grandfather, who was growing old and infirm, having about the same time yielded to the solicitations

of his daughter and her family and given up his farm at Kingley, and removed to the little village of Olveston, in Gloucestershire, about a mile from Sheepcomb, where his son-in-law then resided. Shortly after this Joseph was, for the first time, sent to school. It was a day-school at Thornbury, about three miles distant from his father's house, whither he went in the morning and returned in the evening. The life of unbounded freedom he had hitherto enjoyed, combined with his unusually vigorous and active nature, seem to have rendered the confinement of school at first excessively irksome to him. It is, however, significant and characteristic of the future man that, though he was a remarkably athletic and dauntless boy, he made a solemn resolution with himself never to fight, however sorely provoked. To this he firmly adhered, though the expedient he sometimes adopted to avoid breaking his vow will no doubt provoke a smile. 'Among a number of boys,' he says, in the little sketch of his early life already referred to, 'one's temper is not unfrequently tried, and, as mine was rather of a peppery nature, I found it difficult to keep my resolution; and, in one or two instances, avoided direct boxing only by closing with my antagonist and throwing him on the ground.'

After spending about a year at this Thornbury school, he was sent to a boarding-school at Sidcot, in Somersetshire, kept by a member of the Society of Friends of the name of John Benwell, to whom his pupil bears this honourable testimony—that 'he seemed very solicitous respecting the religious welfare of his boys.' Here he remained about three years, acquiring, and attempting to acquire, nothing more than the rudiments of a plain English education. This was, how-

ever, all the equipment in the form of learning with which he was ever furnished, as he went to no other school after leaving Sidcot. A slight but characteristic reminiscence of his school-days has been communicated to his brother, Mr. Charles Sturge, by one of his school-fellows, Mr. W. W. Young, of Neath. 'Your brother,' says this gentleman, 'was a kind friend of mine for many years; and one circumstance that occurred to me when at school at J. Benwell's, at Sidcot, is so characteristic of his whole life, that I will relate it. He was one of the oldest boys, I was one of the youngest. A boy oppressed me, I appealed to Joseph; he saw me righted, but said I must shake hands and make it up with my opponent. I demurred to this; but he insisted, and said, "William, never let the sun go down on thy wrath." I immediately complied; and often have I since then thought of that boyish advice.'

To the same effect is the account he gives of his own conduct as regards his brother John, who was his junior by six years, and who, during the latter part of his school-days, accompanied him to Sidcot. 'I think,' he says, in the early record from which we have already quoted, 'that when at school with my brother, as far as respected him I endeavoured to do my duty, for I was always ready to take his part when oppressed by any of the elder boys—who are apt to behave in a very tyrannical manner to their juniors—and at the same time tried to prevent his quarrelling with those of his own age.' These slender recollections afford us a glimpse into his early character which is not without considerable interest. 'The child is father of the man;' and it is curious to observe in the school-boy of thirteen, the same combination of quiet firmness in resisting wrong and protecting the weak, with the

cultivation of a placable and conciliatory spirit, which afterwards so strikingly distinguished the man.

When he was fourteen years old, that is, in 1807, he finally left school, and returned to his father's house. About this time do we discover the first indications of his awaking to the consciousness of his own spiritual nature, and its solemn relations and destinies. 'I believe,' he says, 'that at this time I was under strong religious impressions, and was really desirous to act consistently with the will of Him who created me for his glory; but alas! how soon did I give way to the follies of youth, and seemed to care for little except my own gratification.' It would appear that one thing which contributed greatly to produce that deterioration of feeling he here bewails, was the indulgence of a morbid jealousy, under the influence of which he fell, as to his parents' affection towards himself as compared with some of their other children. He seems to have been a boy of a very sensitive nature, and it is possible that his total separation from his parents for several years, during the most interesting period of childhood (an arrangement which seldom fails to beget mischievous results), may have tended somewhat to cool the ardour of parental fondness for the little absentee, and to develope a degree of partiality for those who were always with them, of which the parents may have been themselves scarcely conscious. Be that as it may, we think it is not uninteresting to mark this incident of his early life. It is one of the trials through which many young hearts have to pass, and not the less bitter because it is often borne in secret, or only betrayed by fits of sullenness or passionate emotion, which are generally, but mistakenly, ascribed to mere wilfulness or caprice of temper. It is impossible to guard too carefully in

families against affording grounds for suspicions of this nature. On such matters children are very acute observers, or, rather, they have an instinct of the heart which serves them better than all observation, and which is seldom at fault. They should, if possible, be spared these cankering jealousies, not merely because of the sufferings they entail, which often poison the cup of life when it ought to be most joyously quaffed, but because of the permanently injurious effects they frequently produce on character.

‘Soon after this (he says, referring to his return from school) I unfortunately admitted an idea that my parents acted not altogether in an impartial manner towards me and one of my brothers. This most probably was in part groundless, but it was at first the cause of many a secret tear, for, not being of a communicative disposition, I don’t know that I mentioned my grief to anyone. Far be it from me to accuse my beloved parents of intentional partiality, for I have been treated by them with great affection, and hope as they decline in years I shall be ever ready to make all the return in my power: but if I may judge from my own feelings, I think parents cannot be too careful in avoiding every appearance of that nature; for after this idea is once harboured in the breast of their children, every trifling circumstance contributes to heighten it, and often actions which before would have passed unnoticed, and which in reality have no such bias in them, have that construction put upon them, and in the youthful mind, which is generally alive to the refinements of sensibility, inflicts poignant anguish, which I believe is sometimes productive of very serious effects. This was likely to be my case; for though at first I don’t know that I gave occasion to be treated with less affection than my brothers, yet after I had admitted the idea of partiality, I soon began to act with such resentment and obstinacy as might have justified it. I believe for two or three years after I left school that, had I

been in the way of frequent temptation to vice, I should have yielded to it, and might have been ruined for ever; for, being naturally of a cheerful disposition, I was fond of company of the same description, and as the vicious generally endeavour to conceal their remorse under an appearance of gaiety, I might have been betrayed into their evil courses had I been exposed to their company, especially as the advice and reproof of my parents was uncharitably construed into a disposition to debar me from pleasure and a fondness for finding fault with me.'

But whatever were his sufferings or temptations from this source, he seems to have kept them almost wholly to himself, and it is probable, indeed, that much of the self-condemnation with which he reviewed this portion of his boyish days, was principally owing to that severity of judgment which, as will be found hereafter, he always applied to his own character and conduct throughout life. From the representations of those who remember him at the period in question, we receive no impressions of a sullen or perverse temper, far less of any disposition to vice or vicious associates. On the contrary, he is described as retaining the same buoyancy of spirit, the same joyous life and activity, which marked him as a child, together with great fondness for innocent frolic, and we fear we must add teasing. To this period belongs an anecdote which is preserved in the family, illustrative of his bold and active habits. He was very fond of riding, and though never a skilful, was always a most reckless rider. He had a pony which, not content with galloping along the roads and fields at its utmost speed, he must needs spur up the steepest and roughest banks he could find in the neighbourhood. On such occasions the bailiff on the farm, an old servant of the family, was wont to

interpose his authority with the dictum, 'Thee sha'n't break thy neck, if I can help it.'

After such a brief interval of aimless indolence as often elapses between the conclusion of school-days and the serious commencement of the business of life, he seems to have gradually betaken himself to his father's occupation as a farmer and grazier. It was, indeed, the cherished wish of the latter, who was about to retire from business, that his second son should succeed him as a yeoman in the neighbourhood in which his ancestors had so long borne the same character. For some years—that is, from 1808 to 1814—Joseph acquiesced in this arrangement, though probably with some reluctance, as he never had much fondness for farming. With a view, therefore, the better to prepare and qualify him for his calling, he was not only initiated in all the pursuits and habits of that particular kind of farming which prevailed in that part of Gloucestershire, constantly accompanying his father to fairs and markets to buy and sell sheep, &c., but he was sent for several months in the year to reside with friends, who were farmers in Worcestershire and Warwickshire, with a view to learn something of corn-farming. He seems, indeed, at one time to have contemplated settling in the latter county; for, in the autobiographical document to which we have so often referred, he says:

'About Christmas 1811, I went into Warwickshire, my father having sold a small estate there to the Marquis of Hertford, and I thought it might be a favourable opportunity to apply for a farm under him when there should be one vacant, and, after staying with my friends a few days, I returned with some prospect of having the refusal of the first suitable farm that might offer in that neighbourhood.'

This expectation, however, was not realised, and the old project of settling in Gloucestershire was for some time longer pursued. Accordingly, in certain small journals he began to keep about this time, we find frequent records of early journeys to markets and fairs, of sheep-shearing and barley-sowing, and other occupations of a farmer's life. Towards the latter part of this period he had even begun business on his own account, his father having taken for him a small farm, called Aust Farm, at the back of Aust Cliff, near the estuary of the Severn. His life, however, during this time was far from being wholly absorbed in the labour of the field. On the contrary, we read of pleasant family excursions up the Wye to Tintern Abbey and Swinfield in the summer, of skating by moonlight in winter, and of fine autumn days spent in shooting and coursing—a diversion of which he was passionately fond, though it was very soon relinquished, from the strong conviction that grew upon him that it is not right for a Christian to follow any pursuit simply as an amusement which entails suffering on any of God's creatures.

From that time he fully adopted what the great poet of nature describes as his own resolution

‘Never to mix my pleasure or my pain
With sorrow to the meanest thing that lives.’

We catch glimpses also of an association of young men established at Bristol for mutual improvement, under the modest name of ‘The Endeavour Society,’ to which he belonged. It consisted, as we learn from a friend into whose hands the records have fallen, of the following names, all members of the Society of Friends: John Moore, Samuel Thomas, H. F. Cotterell, George Thomas, J. P. Sturge, and Edward Thomas, to whom was added, soon after its formation, that of Joseph

Sturge. It met once a month, 'confining,' as the rules inform us, 'the subjects of its discussion to science in general, and such branches of literature and the fine arts as are sanctioned by the Society of Friends.' It no doubt gave a salutary impulse to his mind towards self-culture and the observation of nature. He appears to have read three papers before this Society, on Astronomy, Optics, and Meteorology, and in his diary he remarks: 'I think I have no reason to regret having joined the Endeavour Society, for it has given me a greater relish for the study of science, which is in my opinion a pursuit above most others worthy the attention of an intellectual being.'

At this period, also, he began to become interested in some of those benevolent enterprises to which so large a portion of his life was afterwards devoted. His first active exertions of this kind were in connection with the Bible Society, which had then been established about eight years. Under the date of February 11, 1813, we find the following entry in his diary:—

'After going to the market in the morning I attended a meeting of the Bristol Bible Society, where I was much gratified in hearing many animated speeches, which were delivered mostly by the ministers of different denominations of religion. From the reports that were given, the number of these societies appears to be rapidly increasing. Indeed, as the pressure of the times becomes greater, I think British benevolence increases in proportion, for there is scarcely any species of misery but there is some charity open to relieve it; and may these charities continue to increase until misery and want are driven from our happy shores!'

A few months later he is himself actively engaged in the work, as member and secretary of the Thornbury Branch Bible Society, and records his being 'out with

James Hunt over the lower part of the parish of Almondsbury to collect subscriptions for the Thornbury Bible Society, and to see who were in want of Bibles.' Further on, we read of frequent attendances at the Bible Committee, and of a public meeting at Thornbury, 'where Hughes, Thorpe, Mornie, Evans, and Dr. Pole addressed the audience in an eloquent manner. In the afternoon had the pleasure of enjoying the company of Hughes, Mornie, and Evans.'

About the same time his religious feelings received a fresh impulse from a visit paid to the neighbourhood by some eminent ministers of the Society of Friends, namely, William Lewis, Robert Fowler, and William Forster. The addresses and conversation of the last especially, who was indeed a very remarkable man, 'full of faith and power,' seem to have taken strong hold of his mind and heart. He accompanied these friends for several days in their visit to some of the adjoining towns, such as Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucester, Ross, &c., taking great pleasure in aiding them in their mission, by giving notice of their meetings, and providing suitable rooms in which they might be held. Referring to one of these occasions he says :

'R. Fowler spoke once or twice, and W. Forster for a long time; after the meeting was over, he put some small pamphlets in my hands, and requested me to give them to those who appeared to be sober, respectable people. What a glorious work it is to be engaged in, to turn men from their evil ways, and lead them towards a land of eternal peace! While with this friend, I have remembered that part of Scripture which saith, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who preach the Gospel, who publish peace, and bring good tidings of good things."'

And in parting with this excellent man he says :

'I took leave of W. Forster with regret, for it was concluded that I should go to Ross early the next morning to give the Friends notice to have a public invitation issued to the inhabitants to a meeting there in the evening. I think, though I was but a short time with W. F., I shall ever cherish a love for him as long as memory lasts, however I may be carried away by my passions into deviation from the blessed doctrine which he preached. . . . My warmest wishes accompany him on his journey to Ireland, whither he is going, and where he is likely to be for nearly twelve months. May he succeed in turning many to righteousness, and shine himself, as I have no doubt he will, as the stars for ever and ever !'

He never lost his love and reverence for William Forster. Forty years afterwards, when this admirable man and minister of Christ passed to his reward, Joseph Sturge refers to these early days. Writing to an American friend in March 1854, he says :

'We feel most deeply the loss of our dear friend William Forster. He has left few indeed behind him who had so entirely devoted their time and talents to the service of his Lord and Master, and we cannot doubt that, through redeeming love and mercy, he has entered into his eternal rest. I remember travelling with him as guide, more than forty years ago, when I was in my minority, when he was engaged in the work of the ministry, and his telling me as we walked up a hill together that it was his twenty-ninth birthday. In some respects his loss to our Society on this side of the water appears to me irreparable.'

There is one other incident which happened to him during this period of his life to which we must not omit a reference. In the year 1813, while he was in occupation of the small farm already adverted to, he was drawn for the militia, that service being then compulsory. As it was inconsistent with his principles to

bear arms himself, and he was not one to do by proxy what he objected to do in person, he had to suffer the penalty of his principles. His sheep, therefore, were taken, and he happened to reach home one day just in time to see them being driven off the farm.

He had occasion once in after life to refer to this little incident. When he was in the thick of the Suffrage movement in which he bore so active a part, one of his detractors charged him with having advocated the use of physical force for attaining popular rights. The imputation was so notoriously absurd that it could only provoke laughter wherever it was mentioned—as indeed it did when he adverted to it at that meeting in Birmingham in 1842. But so utterly abhorrent to his principles and temper was the doctrine which he was accused of teaching, that he could not suffer the thing to pass over in silence.

‘As a general rule (he said at the meeting referred to) he thought it best to take no notice of attacks made upon him in the public journals, but it had been stated in the “Northern Star” of Saturday last that he had made use of the following language: “The people of this country never could effect the required change except by the sword, and when they were prepared for that his arm was at their service.” So far from advocating any such doctrine, it so happened that when he was only eighteen years of age he was drawn for the militia, and but for the fact of having a small farm with a flock of sheep upon it, he should have gone to prison, as a testimony against any appeal to arms.’

CHAPTER II

IN BUSINESS AND IN THE FAMILY.

Leaves Farming and becomes a Corn-factor at Bewdley—A Visit to North Wales—Begins House-keeping—His proposed Plan of Life—Death of his Father—His Tenderness to his Mother—Letter to her—Death of his Mother—Receives his Brothers and Sisters to his own Home—His Affection and Care for them—His early Experience in Business—Hazardous Nature of the Corn Trade—Losses and Discouragements—His Industry and Energy—Attention to his Religious Duties amid the Pressure of Business—And to Works of Benevolence and Charity—Gradual Commercial Prosperity—Removal to Birmingham—Relaxes his Attention to Business—His Apprehension of the Dangers of great Wealth—His Brother Charles's great Services—His rigid Commercial Integrity—Sacrifices in the Temperance Cause—Anecdote illustrating Conscientiousness in Business—His Conduct as an Employer of Labour—His Leniency to the Unfortunate.

WE have already intimated that Joseph Sturge seems never to have had much relish for a farmer's life. It is probable, indeed, that his active spirit aspired almost instinctively after a wider sphere of action than would have been afforded to him as a farmer in a remote country village, while Providence, which had an appointed work in reserve for him, as an agent in promoting its own beneficent designs, was no doubt 'leading him by a way that he knew not' to the position and circumstances where he could best accomplish the work that was given him to do. In the early part of the year 1814, while on a visit to his friends, the Cotterells, at Bewdley in Worcestershire, he received, very unexpectedly, a proposal to enter into business as a

corn-factor, in partnership with H. F. Cotterell, the son of his host. After taking some time to deliberate and consult with his friends, he accepted the offer, and on July 13th in the same year, being not quite twenty-one years of age, he left his father's house, and took up his residence at Bewdley. The separation from his family was a sore trial to him. In his diary we find the following entry under the above date:—'Took my leave of my friends and relations, which was indeed a severe task, as it seemed like breaking all my nearest and dearest ties at once. It was in vain that I accused myself of weakness in giving way to my grief; I hardly knew how much I loved them till I was about to lose them.' He left behind him a parcel containing a present for each member of the family, together with a letter, in which he bade them an affectionate farewell, and humbly besought their forgiveness if he had ever given any of them just cause of offence, while he assured them that 'neither time nor distance will prevent him from continuing their affectionate son and brother.' Very nobly did he redeem this promise, as will be seen by the sequel. Almost immediately on his arrival at Bewdley, he and his partner started on a tour into North Wales, partly for business and partly for pleasure. A few brief extracts from a diary he kept at that time may interest the reader, as showing the simple and healthy zest with which he entered then, as he ever did through life, into all innocent enjoyment within his reach. They will afford us, also, a glimpse of what has long since disappeared—a Welsh meeting of Friends.*

* By this is not meant a meeting of Friends in Wales, of which there are still several, but a meeting of Welsh people, where the religious exercises were conducted in that language.

'August 27.—Went to Llanfair to breakfast. Most of the road was very fine, commanding extensive prospects at intervals of the surrounding country and the distant mountains of Merionethshire. A great number of mountain-ashes grow in the hedges on the road-side, whose red berries made a very pretty appearance at this time of the year. The small town of Llanfair is situated by the side of the river Vernew, and has a fine appearance as you descend towards it. Met with a very kind reception at William Owen's, a relation of H. F. Cotterell, and went with him over his farm at the top of a hill about a mile from the town. As it was market-day, we had an opportunity of seeing most of the people living in the neighbourhood around, who appeared to talk Welsh almost entirely among themselves; and even the crier delivered himself in that language.

'28th.—Set off early in the morning, and got to Mallwyd to breakfast; the country, during the latter part of the road, is remarkably beautiful. After riding for some time along the banks of the river Vernew, we arrived at its source; and within a few yards is the source of the river Dovey, the one running into the Irish Sea, and the other pouring its tributary waters into the Severn in a contrary direction. The waters of the Dovey rapidly increase as they flow into the valley below the road, and its rushing noise as it rolls over its rocky bed gives additional charm to the beauty of the surrounding country. While breakfast was getting ready, we walked down to the Salmon Leap, a waterfall where those fish are caught as they leap upwards. There is a very beautiful bridge a little below; the waters of the fall foaming beneath it, and being within the sound of two other waterfalls, the whole has a most romantic effect. Set off after breakfast for Tyddynygareg meeting. The scenery in some places is grand beyond description. A little before we got to Tyddynygareg we came in sight of Cader Idris, which, though it is said to be a mile in perpendicular elevation, did not strike us at first as being particularly lofty, on account of its being surrounded by other mountains. A short time after our arrival a few friends came, perhaps about ten, who live mostly among these

desolate mountains. When the meeting had been gathered about three-quarters of an hour, an elderly Friend got up and spoke in Welsh with considerable fluency, and for some time again, a little before the close of the meeting. The Friend, who lived at the meeting-house, appeared to be the only one who could talk English tolerably well, except one other person who had recently come among them. The women Friends had nearly the same dress as the rest of the country people in most parts of Wales, that is, a high-crowned man's hat, with a long blue or brown cloth cloak, which is, I believe, worn winter and summer. After meeting went on to Dolgelly, about two miles distant. It lies in a rich cultivated vale below, of considerable extent, and surrounded by lofty and barren mountains, with the river Mynach winding down from it towards the Irish Sea. After taking some refreshments at Dolgelly, we left our horses and went on foot to Barmouth, about ten miles off. The afternoon being very fine, the country wore an appearance of beauty exceeding all description. Cader Idris rose over two or three successive hills in majestic grandeur, catching at times the fine clouds that floated in the atmosphere in that direction. . . .

30th.—Set off early in the morning from Mallwyd, and had a fine ride to Llanfair. Went to hear the Welsh harp, a very fine instrument of music; a person sang to it at intervals, but not constantly. We were again treated with great kindness by William Owen, who had a harper to play in the next room while we dined."

For some time after Mr. Sturge's removal to Bewdley he boarded with the Cotterell family at their residence called the Summer-House. It was not long, however, before he commenced an establishment for himself, though on a very modest scale, corresponding with the humble beginnings of his operations in business. Some time in the year 1815 he took a small house of some 15*l*. or 20*l*. rental, in the hamlet of Wribbenhall, on the opposite bank of the Severn to that on which Bewdley

was situated. There his sister Sophia, as had been the dearest wish of her heart, joined him as his housekeeper, as well as his faithful counsellor and companion in all good works—a position which, with one brief interval, she continued ever after to occupy, until her death in 1845. Among the papers found after his death is one which he wrote about this time, headed ‘A proposed plan of life which I hope to pursue when I become a housekeeper on my own account.’ In this document he arranges the disposal of his time, devoting an assigned portion to business, to his religious duties, to the enjoyments of home, certain hours of the week also to be given to ‘some useful engagement, such as attending a charity-school, &c.’ ‘I hope,’ he continues, ‘in this, as in all other instances, I shall try to do, according to my poor ability, my duty, and endeavour to live acceptably in the divine sight. The management of my domestic concerns to be left entirely to my sister, whom I hope to have to live with me, or to my wife, should I ever marry. The whole of my expenses, including everything out of my own pocket, not to exceed 1,000*l.* for the first four years after beginning house-keeping. If Providence should so render my endeavours successful as to make my income, during that period, far exceed this sum, rather than increase my own luxuries, lay it out in relieving the distressed, making sufficient allowance for casualties, &c. But should my expenses be found to exceed my income, look over the accounts of the preceding year, and, if it be possible, retrench, rather than presume on the possibility of having a better return next year. To sacrifice many of my own comforts rather than not be able to entertain a friend or relation with pleasure, and give him a cordial welcome. As I am placed almost alone with regard to

our Society, I trust that, however far I may be from attaining a true state of religious experience myself, I may be able so to conduct myself as not to be a stumbling-block to others.'

Such was the humble, prudent, and pious spirit in which he began life.

Before proceeding, however, to follow his course as a man of business, we must look at him for a moment in his family relations—as a son and brother. For though he was not married until nearly forty years old, grave domestic responsibilities devolved upon him early in life. His father died in June 1817, when he was twenty-four, and from that time he seems to have assumed, with all cheerfulness, the character of counsellor and care-taker for those left behind. His first thoughts, of course, were directed to his bereaved mother. The survivors of the family retain a vivid recollection of his extreme tenderness to her at all times, but especially during the period of her brief widowhood. One trifling incident may be mentioned as illustrative of this. Shortly before her husband's death her eyesight had begun seriously to fail, and she was much distressed with the fear of becoming quite blind. Her son thought and enquired constantly for some means to relieve the tedium and depression which her state naturally occasioned. At length, when he was in London one day, a table spinning-wheel caught his eye in Fleet Street. He purchased it, and to his great satisfaction, when he took it to her, he found that when young she had learnt to spin, and it proved quite a solace to her. One of his letters to her after his father's decease still remains, from which we subjoin an extract or two. A few years later, when his own religious knowledge and experience had become deeper,

he would, no doubt, have led her to higher sources of comfort than any which this letter suggests. But the thoughtfulness and delicacy with which he tries to soothe her sorrows are very striking :—

‘MY DEAR MOTHER,—Though various occupations tend to divert my thoughts, yet they often recur to thee and the dear circle at Olveston, and I have felt a desire to add, were it only a drop, to the cup of consolation which has been handed by others, as an alleviation of that afflictive dispensation which we have all had, but thou in an especial manner, deeply to feel. But though affection will too frequently recur to what is lost with the pangs of the keenest regret, yet is it not right to endeavour to dissipate such feelings by numbering those blessings which remain; and though a principal source of happiness may be dried up, endeavour to attain a disposition to thankfulness for having so long enjoyed it, rather than mourn its loss with hurtful and unavailing sorrow? Consider, my dear mother, how few remained united so long as you have done; how few have left behind them eleven children, all of whom, according to their ability, would, I believe, esteem it a favour to add to thy happiness, and whom, *he* had reason to hope to the day of his death, would all become respectable members of society, and when they were deprived of his fostering care, would endeavour to lend a helping hand to thee and to each other. Yes, my dear mother, I believe his sufferings in his illness were mitigated by many soothing reflections exclusive of those which he derived from his own peaceful conscience. And now that it has pleased Divine Providence to take him from a state of trial, let us, rather than allow the remembrance of what we have lost to embitter the future, endeavour after a state of cheerful resignation, and an innocent enjoyment of the many blessings we have left. As it has been very justly observed, that ‘those most truly mourn the dead who live as they would wish,’ so perhaps the greatest respect to their memories is to copy their good qualities. Those which were conspicuous in my dear father were his forgiveness of injuries, and an endeavour to check

all improper indulgence of grief. Few had, I believe, more sensibility and affection, and therefore it must have required great effort to overcome his feelings; but by always striving after it when he deemed it right, he not only did so, but was enabled to afford comfort to others when he himself felt most acutely; and I believe if his spirit could hover round his former dwelling, and it were possible for any earthly consideration to add to his present felicity, it would be the conviction that his removal to happier regions had not embittered thy future days. . . . Far be it, my dear mother, from my intention to imply by these remarks that thou art improperly cherishing grief. I think thou hast already attained as much serenity as, in the time, we could hope for. I only wish to encourage thee to persevere in thy endeavours, and I have little doubt but in time they will be crowned with complete success.'

But the sorrow of the widowed mother did not last long. In less than two years she followed her husband to the resting-place of the weary. The younger members of the family being thus left without a home, our friend left his small house at Wribbenhall, and took a larger one, called Netherton, a little outside the town of Bewdley, where he afterwards resided until his removal to Birmingham. Under this roof did his brothers and sisters, not yet settled in life, receive a warm and generous welcome, Joseph assuming towards them the responsibilities of a father, which he exercised with the utmost delicacy and affection until they had all found homes of their own. With what thoughtful care, with what disinterested love, he watched over them, is evidenced by some of his papers and letters now before us. There is one document, especially, which is strikingly significant of this. His early experience in business, as we shall have immediately to show, was a record of severe struggles and discouragement.

ments. But when the clouds dispersed, and the light of prosperity began to irradiate his path, his first thought was how he might turn it to account in favour of his orphan brothers and sisters. In the document to which we have just alluded, after stating his belief that on certain contingencies he might reasonably expect to have realised a considerable sum, which he names, as the reward of several years' hard toil, he goes on to say, that if matters turned out as he hoped, it was his intention to make an offer to his younger brothers, by which they might at once share in an equal degree with himself in whatever advantages might accrue from his long and laborious application to business. He then adds—

‘That it be an express part of this agreement (doubtless as much our pleasure as our duty) to appropriate a sufficient sum to enable those of our sisters who may remain unmarried, with the addition of their own income, to keep a comfortable separate establishment, should any unforeseen alteration make it not agreeable to them to form part of either of our families, and that this be done in a way as little likely as possible to make them feel any supposed obligation a burden. . . . There are few families that have been, I should suppose, more united than ours has hitherto been; and any service it has been in my power to render them has been a source of unmixed satisfaction to me, whether I was at the time labouring under personal discouragements or enjoying comparative prosperity; and why should it be less so as I increase in years, even should a change in my situation call me to the discharge of conjugal or parental duties? I believe it would not; for I am convinced that the happiness of children is not generally increased by inheriting affluence from their parents. . . . It is a just order of Providence that selfishness should not only prevent our being of service to others, but curtail our own enjoyments; for what is a source of more rational satisfaction than

the conviction that you have been instrumental in adding to the comfort and happiness of others, and particularly those who are dear to you?’

The plan indicated in the former part of this paper was never carried into effect, owing, among other things, no doubt, to the fact that soon after it was written his own business underwent severe reverses, which confounded all the calculations on which it was based. He says, indeed, in one part, ‘I am aware that the above plan would appear to many rather as the Utopian flight of a sanguine imagination than as one that there is any probability of being realised.’ But it was a sort of Utopia that could only have been born of a very loving and unselfish temper.

There is a letter extant which he wrote to a younger brother when the latter was quite a youth, which is full of sound counsel and brotherly solicitude. He warns him, though with the utmost gentleness, against certain failings which he had observed in his conduct. One of these was a disposition to indulge rather too freely in raillery at the expense of a younger member of the family.

‘In making use of raillery towards anyone, thou should’st be very careful not to carry it further than thou art satisfied is quite agreeable to the person it is aimed at. I don’t know that I see danger of thy erring much in this respect towards anyone except H——; and I wish to impress upon thee that, as you are now situated, it is thy place, as the eldest, to be very vigilant that nothing occur to weaken that affection which I hope will always subsist between you; and I beg thee to bear in mind that if it be weakened from ever so trivial a cause, it is very often never restored in all its original beauty. I am far from wishing to restrain innocent cheerfulness, but would rather desire to promote it; but I would wish thee to weigh well the distinction between that proper degree of it

which is the almost necessary attendant of a contented and grateful mind,

“And the loud laugh which speaks the vacant mind.”

He then urges upon him, above all things, not to neglect his religious duties.

‘I consider myself under considerable obligation to thee for thy attention to my business, but I hope, my dear brother, thou wilt never so far give thy attention either to mine or thy own as to make it the principal object in view. Under all circumstances endeavour to act acceptably in the Divine sight; let this be the *paramount* object. This disposition of the mind is, I believe, by no means incompatible with a full occupation of the mind with our proper affairs; but it requires great watchfulness. I believe I am no bigot, but I think the principles of Friends approach the nearest of any sect to true Christianity; and though, I doubt not, a person may be totally devoid of religion, and yet conform to the strictest letter of the law, yet I think we should be very cautious how we deviate from any of those peculiarities which belong to our profession. Though they may appear as trifles, yet if we deviate from them merely because they are irksome, we shall, I think, generally find such conduct weaken us as Christians, and we may perhaps be avoiding the only means we have of proving our dedication to Him, obedience to whose will is the intent of our creation. On a subject of such infinite importance it behoves us, at least, to be very jealous of ourselves, and to examine thoroughly the ground on which we stand. . . . I wish thee to pay particular attention to anything thy sisters may intimate to thee as not quite meeting their approbation, either in thy manners or conduct. . . . Do not suppose, my dear brother, that anything I have said in this letter is in the least degree dictated by a disposition to think harshly of thee, or a supposition that I have been less defective than thou hast in the performance of my duties. I believe I have much more to condemn myself for than thou hast, and if my example were more worthy thy imitation, there

would be less occasion for me to offer thee advice. Still it is our duty to watch over each other for good, and we may sometimes point out to others dangers which we may not have been able to avoid ourselves.'

There is one point very noticeable in the conduct of Joseph Sturge when at the head of the family of brothers and sisters which had made his house their home—that is, his anxiety to promote confidence and love on their part towards each other. He was not one of those who think that family affection may be trusted to mere natural instinct. In his judgment, a plant so delicate and precious required careful and constant cultivation by all forms of gentle courtesy and generous forbearance. Very amply was he rewarded for his fraternal solicitude in this and other respects. The domestic circle at Netherton has been described to us by those who still remember it, as the very home of peace and love, while the brother who was its presiding spirit came to be looked upon, and continued through life to be regarded by all its members, with a mixture of the deepest affection and reverence. This was very touchingly displayed on one occasion. His brother John, an able and accomplished man, who gave great promise of future usefulness, died in the prime of life. In a little record of the death-bed scene, preserved by one of his sisters, we are told that for some time before his release he was quite lost in delirium. 'But in the midst of it,' says the record, 'his strong and livelong affection for his brother Joseph was many times very touchingly manifested. He always knew *him*, and was often soothed by the tones of his voice. On passing the door of his room a few minutes before his death, I heard him distinctly say "Joseph," and this was, I believe, the last word he ever uttered.'

We have seen in what spirit Mr. Sturge entered on the business of life, and we must now endeavour to ascertain what manner of man he proved himself to be amid the excitements and temptations of that commercial course to which he was now committed. His partnership with Mr. Cotterell lasted only for about three years, after which he started on his own account, and so continued until he was joined by his brother Charles in the year 1822. In this interval of about eight years, he devoted himself to business with unremitting assiduity. At that time the trade in corn was of a singularly hazardous and speculative character. So great, frequent, and sudden were the fluctuations in prices that, though sometimes large fortunes were rapidly made, yet those who did not conduct their affairs with great prudence were liable to be as rapidly involved in ruin, and often with the loss of reputation and character. Launched on such a sea as this, where the currents were so uncertain, and the squalls so violent and treacherous, it required a most vigilant and steady pilotage to avoid shipwreck. It is evident, indeed, from several brief entries in his diary, that Mr. Sturge had to pass through many periods of intense anxiety—so much so, that on more than one occasion he was on the eve of relinquishing the trade altogether; and his sensitive conscientiousness kept him in constant alarm lest he should, whether by imprudence or accident, involve others in loss by his means. It may not be uninteresting if we cite one or two passages indicating the severe discouragements he had to sustain at the outset of his commercial career, and amid what struggles and perplexities were laid the foundations of that extensive business, which afterwards rendered the firm of which he was the head, one of

the foremost houses in the corn trade of England. Thus, in the year 1820, he writes—

‘My business has for some time been very discouraging, and I am likely to sustain some heavy losses by my stock in hand. Though I hope I do endeavour not to feel too much anxiety on account of these circumstances, yet I cannot help at times letting them have more weight than I think they ought to have; for if we are but in the station for which Providence designed us, and do but perform our part in it as we ought, I believe it is of very little consequence to us whether we have little or much of this world’s goods. I have the last year or two met with some deeper trials than, perhaps, any but myself are aware of, but, I fear, without deriving from them that benefit which I should have done; and if it should seem good to unerring wisdom to try me still further; O that it may be the means of enabling me to fix my hopes more entirely on another and a better world! but should the tide of prosperity set in in my favour, may I be doubly circumspect, and ever bear in mind that all additional outward blessings call for additional gratitude and devotion to Him from whom they are derived; and surely, even now, I enjoy in numerous ways far more than my share of the blessings of this life, and when I am conscious of anything like feelings of discontent arising, should adopt the language of the poet:

“It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguished than ourselves, that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathise with others suffering more.”

Nor was this the effect of mere temporary depression of trade. For, two years later, under date of January 1, 1822, we find the following:—

‘I have recently sustained some heavy losses of my property. O that this and other trials I have had to pass through may be productive, as no doubt they were intended to be, of instruction to me, and teach me the utter vanity of all sublunary things! My future prospects are deeply hid in

uncertainty, and I know not, if my life is spared, where at the end of another year I shall have pitched my tent. It seems, however, I think pretty clear, that I shall leave this place, and I trust I am sincerely desirous of moving under the direction of a higher wisdom than my own.'

A few months later, he continues in the same strain :—

'I have again had losses and trials in business, but I fear they have not that purifying effect upon me for which they are no doubt intended. It seems probable that I shall lose very nearly all my property, and I am sometimes ready to think it will be right for me to get into some menial situation. I trust, however, I do feel thankful that I am likely to be favoured to get through without injuring anyone's property but my own, and that I am ready to occupy my proper station, be it ever so low, if I could only clearly see what that was.'

Down, indeed, to a much later period than this, there were critical seasons in the history of that most uncertain trade in which he was engaged, when he seemed to oscillate on the very verge of ruin, and when he must have passed through mental agitations of a very painful and protracted nature. Of one thing, however, he was determined, that through no indolence or remissness on his part, through no perfunctory discharge of his duties as a man of business, should he have to reproach his conscience for want of success. It was not, indeed, in his nature to engage in anything by halves. Whatsoever his hand found to do, he did with his might. But the strenuous energy with which he devoted himself to his calling during the early part of his commercial career was, no doubt, a matter of principle no less than of natural temperament. No otherwise would it have been possible for him to have met the exigencies of the time,

and fulfilled his own obligations. Accordingly we find, that his exertions during these years were such as to tax to the utmost all his alacrity of spirit, and all the vigour of his robust physical frame. A great part of his duty consisted in attending markets in a large circle of towns for the purchase and sale of corn, or for watching the constant fluctuations of the trade. His journeys were frequently performed on horseback, for means of communication were far less ample in those days than they are at present; and as they had to be undertaken in all weathers and in every season of the year, and the distances to be traversed were often great, the labour and fatigue must have been sometimes extreme.

‘His industry,’ says Mr. Pumphrey,* referring to this period of his life, ‘was exceeded by few, and his power of endurance was scarcely less remarkable. Bewdley Meeting was united to Worcester as a Preparative Meeting, and I have known him, at a time of great feverish excitement in the corn trade, come over to Worcester on a first day morning and attend the Preparative Meeting; take the mail at night, and travel (on the old coaching system) an eleven or twelve hours’ journey to London; attend Mark Lane market on the second day, proceed by that night’s coach to Bristol; attend market there on third day, travel thence to Gloucester, and, reaching there late at night, obtain a few hours’ rest before proceeding sixteen miles to Ross to attend his Quarterly Meeting on fourth day; after which he again mounted the coach, and undertook another long journey to Liverpool.’

His journals bear ample evidence to the same effect. It was thus by many years of hard struggles, of deep

* We quote from an interesting sketch of Mr. Sturge’s character and labours written for private circulation shortly after his decease, by an early and livelong friend, Mr. Thomas Pumphrey, who has himself since followed his friend from works to rewards.

anxieties, and of doubtful results, that Joseph Sturge laid the foundation of that fine commercial fabric which afterwards grew so much in extent and in estimation, and enabled him so largely to lend his pecuniary aid to the benevolent enterprises in which he was engaged. There was, of course, nothing very peculiar in his experience in this respect. There are thousands of self-made men in our trading and mercantile community who have worked their way to competence, and even to affluence, through a long course of similar conflicts with early difficulties. But how often is it that the moral nature sustains all but irreparable damage by the process. When men dwell and strive too long in that sordid earthly element, it is apt to enter into their souls,

‘And almost thence their nature is subdued
To what it works in like the dyer’s hand.’

Even where a certain conventional integrity has been irreproachably maintained, the fine edge of a conscientious sensitiveness has in many instances been grievously blunted. Still more frequently is there engendered a hard, grasping, purse-proud spirit, betraying itself in an inordinate over-estimate of the value of wealth, an insensibility to all the higher forms of intellectual and spiritual worth, and a harsh, pitiless judgment for the failings and misfortunes of less pushing and prosperous men. But what does seem to us peculiar in the case of Joseph Sturge is this, that he emerged out of this coarse battle with worldly cares and embarrassments without having suffered any perceptible injury. To the last he preserved a singular tenderness of conscience, a large and generous interest in all moral questions, and a heart instinct with the gentlest feelings of charity for the failings, and of

sympathy for the sorrows, of others. It may be worth while enquiring how this came to pass.

In the first place, then, Mr. Sturge never, even in the busiest periods of life, allowed himself to neglect his religious duties. On the contrary, as if conscious of the peril he incurred, he seems to have redoubled his care in this respect at those seasons when he was drawn most deeply into the dizzying vortex of commercial competition and activity. Accordingly, in the brief journals he kept at the time now referred to, between the years 1816 and 1825, when he was most hardly bested with anxieties in business, we find these two entries continually alternating almost day by day—‘Attended meeting’ and ‘Attended market.’ It was not merely at home, but at Worcester, Bristol, Birmingham, and other towns which he visited for business purposes, that he sought every opportunity of retiring from the cares of daily life into the sanctuary of God for meditation and prayer. In the town of Bewdley where he resided there were only five or six members of the Society of Friends living at this time, and these were wont to assemble in a small meeting-house just outside the town. As there was no minister of the body residing in the neighbourhood, their meetings were almost invariably ‘silent meetings.’ Thither, however, Joseph Sturge repaired with unfailing punctuality, both on Sundays and the accustomed week-days, for many years. Whatever the press of business, however critical the condition of the corn market, no excuse was allowed to serve for otherwise occupying those hours consecrated to silent and almost solitary worship. The spot, indeed, was well adapted for contemplation and prayer. The little rustic chapel, which is still extant, stands quite apart from all other buildings at the bottom of a small

garden, and is shadowed all round with fruit trees, a grape vine creeping over the roof and adorning the homely eaves with its fragrant festoons. A few green mounds, visible through the open door, indicate the spot where some of the rude forefathers of the hamlet



HEWDLEY MEETING-HOUSE.

sleep. Thus shut out from the world, no sound could reach the worshippers but the song of birds or the distant murmur of the Severn, which flowed through the meadows at the back of the building. It is impossible to over-estimate the value of these seasons of seclusion when, retreating from the distractions of his outward life, he could commune with his own soul and with God, and be still. By this means those higher feelings of the soul were revived and refreshed,

‘That in the various bustle of resort
Are oft too ruffled and sometimes impaired.’

'He was remarkably endowed,' says the early friend already quoted, 'with the power of being "a whole man to one thing at a time;" and though the voice of brotherly counsel and exhortation was seldom heard at the Bewdley meeting-house, who can doubt that oftentimes his soul was there refreshed from the well-springs of life, and instructed by the immediate teachings of "the minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man."'*

But we must advert to another thing which must have contributed greatly to preserve his mind from the narrow and debasing influence which sometimes attends too exclusive a devotion to commercial life. He never suffered himself to become a mere man of business, and to shut out all other interests from his mind but those of speculation and money-making. He did not, indeed, and could not in those early years, devote so much of his time and labour to public and philanthropic objects as he did after his commercial position was in some degree assured, and others had become associated with him who relieved him from the necessity of giving attention to details. But at no time—not even during those life-and-death struggles of which, as we have seen, his journals give us such pregnant hints—did he deem himself at liberty to become wholly absorbed in the

* Mr. Pumphrey notes a circumstance connected with his attendance at this little meeting which, he says, impressed him deeply when a youth. The house which Joseph Sturge occupied for several years before he left Bewdley was not more than a third of a mile from the meeting-house, but on the opposite side of the river. The family kept a boat for the convenience of crossing, which they could have done in a few minutes. But so important did he feel it to bear an open testimony before his neighbours to the duty of public worship, and not to seem ashamed of his own profession, that he preferred on the Sunday walking round by the bridge, five or six times the distance, which would lead him through the whole length of the hamlet on one side of the Severn, and back again through the town of Bewdley on the other.

selfish pursuit of his own affairs. Side by side with those entries in which he records his losses and embarrassments in business, and the almost Herculean efforts of body and mind which he made to surmount them, together with allusions to yet more bitter disappointments that on more than one occasion befell him, we find others which prove that, even in the severest depths of worldly anxiety and wounded affection, he had still time and sympathy to bestow upon the sufferings of others, and even upon those benevolent undertakings which concerned the general good. On one page he writes on his birthday :

‘ My business is very discouraging at present, and perhaps Divine Providence may see right to blast all my worldly prosperity. . . . Perhaps I may not live to see another birthday; indeed, if I were but prepared to die, there seems little to wish to live for except that I may be of some use to some of my dear brothers and sisters, deprived of both their parents.’

But a few pages further on there is this entry :

‘ Severe weather. Went out with W. C. collecting subscriptions for the distribution of coal among the poor.’

Elsewhere, also, we find similar allusions, indicating the active part he took even then in various forms of Christian philanthropy within his own circle.

The London Peace Society was formed in the year 1816, and Mr. Sturge became deeply interested in its objects and operations from the first. In 1818 he originated at Worcester an auxiliary to the parent Society, to which he devoted much time and labour, coming regularly fourteen miles from Bewdley to attend its committees for several years. Very soon, also, his attention was drawn to the Anti-slavery cause. His

services in connection with these and other benevolent enterprises will be more fully narrated hereafter. They are now referred to only in illustration of the statement already made, that in the earliest periods of his commercial life, his heart was kept open to more genial and generous influences by the wise liberality of sentiment with which he refused to become exclusively absorbed in mere matters of business. In a letter to his cousin, Mr. J. P. Sturge, of Bristol, written under date of August 30, 1825, he expresses himself thus:—

‘I am obliged to thee for thy good wishes. If I appear to be settling down as an old bachelor, I am no enemy to matrimony, though, I confess, I should be a little afraid of it if I thought it was a state which required family duties and cares to supersede and absorb all others. Canst thou not find a little time to devote to the Anti-slavery cause? There was a great deal of light thrown upon the subject at the last yearly meeting, and I am sanguine in the belief that, if Friends generally do *all* they can, and we are favoured with the continuance of peace ten years longer, we shall be able to give a death-blow to slavery itself, and that in a manner perfectly in accordance with our pacific principles—I mean by the fair competition of free labour. As the happiness of millions are concerned, it is at least worth while, I think, for all of us to examine whether we can do anything to assist in this great work.’

By the steady application of the principles we have indicated, Mr. Sturge gradually surmounted the difficulties which beset him at the outset of his commercial career. His vigorous character, combined with his unswerving integrity, won the confidence of an ever-widening circle of persons, anxious to become associated with him in relations of business. In proportion as his operations thus expanded, he saw more and more clearly that Birmingham, then rapidly becoming the capital of

the midland districts, would be a more suitable locality for his trade than the small provincial town of Bewdley. He had opened an office, and spent several days in the week there, from so early as the year 1820 ; and as business naturally gravitated more and more in that direction, he transferred his residence thither in 1822, taking up his first abode in Birmingham at a house in Monument Place, but soon afterwards removing to another house in Edgbaston, which he built himself, and in which he continued until the day of his death. From that time his business began to enlarge and prosper greatly, subject only to those perilous alternations to which, as we have already intimated, the corn trade was then so peculiarly liable. There can be little doubt that if Mr. Sturge had now devoted himself wholly to commercial pursuits, he might have grown enormously rich. He was held by those who were most intimately associated with him in such relations, to possess very rare qualifications for business. The energy and decision which marked all his movements were guided by a clear judgment, and a temper singularly calm and self-possessed, while his natural sagacity, sharpened by long experience, had attained, in all that related to the changes and chances of the market, ' to something like prophetic strain.' There was, therefore, scarcely any height of mercantile prosperity and affluence to which he might not have aspired. But not only did he not desire great wealth, but he shrunk from it with absolute dread. He often referred with something like a shudder to the deteriorating effects he had so often witnessed on the character of men as they grew rich, or, if not upon their own, upon that of their descendants of the next generation.

A few extracts from his letters will convey his senti-

ments on these points better than any representation of ours. To one of his nephews who had recently entered into business he says :—

‘My experience of the anxieties of a large and fluctuating business—though on the average it may bring in a considerable income—leads me to the conviction that a contented mind, with a limited but tolerably steady return, independently of its great moral and religious advantages, is by far the happiest position, looking only to this life. Surplus wealth brings always increased temptations, and of course increased responsibility, to those who wish rightly to use it.’

The following letter was written to a friend, whom he had evidently kindly warned of the danger, amid increasing prosperity, of ‘withholding more than was meet.’

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am obliged by thy letter, and in reference to the subject to which it principally alludes, perhaps in the short conversation we had the other day, I might have expressed myself too strongly; but knowing my own weakness, and how difficult I have found it to keep in a disposition to give in proportion to increase of means, I am perhaps too jealous of my friends. But I hope thou wilt not think that I wished to do more than throw out an affectionate caution. Far be it from me to say that thou mayest not have ample reason for withholding more than thou hast hitherto done; but the more I have reflected upon the subject, the more I am convinced that, notwithstanding the almost universal practice to the contrary, the laying up of a large *future* provision for children or relatives is not a justification in the sight of God for the *present* neglect of anything that duty appears to require; and the curse which such provisions almost invariably prove to those who receive them, would have strongly confirmed me in this view, even had not our Saviour’s words been so very explicit on this point. In this I do not, of course, include any needful *present* supply to those

who may have a claim upon us from relationship or any other cause. But the subject is a wide one. Perhaps we may have an opportunity of talking it over before long.'

In the same strain, he writes on another occasion, late in life; while warning his correspondent against too much anxiety to lay up larger stores of wealth for his family:—

'One of the things which has struck me most forcibly with regard to wealth, is the curse it often proves to children. Really, both in our Society and out of it, I find that if I want any young person to help me in any benevolent or religious object, I must, with rare exceptions, go to those who are dependent upon their own exertions for support; the children of the rich, too often, will not only do nothing themselves, but like "the dog in the manger," try to obstruct those who do.'

Again, in writing to a wealthy friend, whose son was about to marry, he says:—

'I sincerely wish thy son as much happiness in his matrimonial prospects as is consistent with a state of preparation for that kingdom where happiness exists without alloy. May he escape the terrible temptation of which He, who alone fully knew the heart of man, warned us when he said that "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for those who are exposed to it to enter into the kingdom of heaven."'

One other extract we give, which derives a very affecting interest from the fact that it was written only a few weeks before his death, and evidently under a consciousness that for him the great change was at hand. It is dated April 2, 1859:—

'Thou speaks of the prosperity of commerce. This is not, I believe, particularly the case here, and does not certainly just now extend to the corn trade. But I confess I do not hear with much pleasure of this prosperity, so far as its influence

on character is concerned. It seems so generally accompanied by an increased use of it for mere selfish indulgences, or an increased desire to accumulate wealth, that it often makes me sad. But the conviction that *I* have a very short time left for labour ought to make me doubly watchful more and more honestly to endeavour to remove the beam out of my own eye, instead of looking for the mote in my brother's eye.'

How earnestly Mr. Sturge strove to fashion his own life in accordance with these principles, is shown by the whole tenour of his conduct. No sooner were his circumstances placed in a position of tolerable security by his early commercial success, than he began to relax his attention to business, and to devote more of his time, his energies, and his substance to that course of public service and philanthropy for which, during many years, he may be said to have almost exclusively lived. We believe, indeed, that in the latter periods of life he continued his connection with business at all, mainly as affording him ampler means for promoting the various schemes of beneficence on which his heart was intent. It was one of the felicities of his lot to have associated with him in his mercantile affairs his brother Charles, who, while every way competent to conduct the large transactions of the firm in which he was the active partner, at the same time so fully sympathised with all his benevolent views and projects, and felt so deeply that he had a mission to fulfil in the service of God and man that he not only acquiesced in, but earnestly encouraged his brother Joseph to give himself to the work to which he was so obviously called, and, indeed, was ever ready to place at his disposal large sums out of his own resources to aid him in accomplishing his objects. By this happy arrangement he soon became more and more liberated from the trammels of business. Before, however, we

follow the current of his history into the more open space along which it is destined hereafter to flow, we must dwell yet a little longer upon some of the characteristics which marked him in his relations as a man of business.

We believe that Mr. Sturge, to an extent that is, unhappily, rare even among professedly religious men, governed his commercial course by the rules of a Christian conscience. Through all the agitations and embarrassments of his early life in business, he never for a moment yielded to the temptation to avail himself of any of those questionable expedients that involve more or less of deflection from the strict line of integrity to which many have recourse, under the pressure of difficulties, and which, even when successful, leave scars upon the conscience, never afterwards wholly erased. As we have already seen by the extracts from his journals, he was determined, whatever became of his own money, if possible to keep his soul clean even from the appearance of defrauding others. And when, in spite of all the diligence and energy he put forth during those years, and all the prudence with which he endeavoured to abstain from unnecessary speculation, he could not escape the vicissitudes of the hazardous trade in which he had embarked, what was the course that he adopted to meet the emergency?

‘Twice, at least (says Mr. Pumphrey), he lost a considerable portion of his property, and, with his characteristic decision, he at once reduced his expenditure to his altered circumstances. On one occasion, for three years in succession, he limited his expenses to 100*l.* a year, and during that period was known sometimes to deny himself a dinner, that he might still have something to bestow upon the more necessitous. On another occasion, rather later in life, but before his

marriage, he entirely gave up housekeeping. He often recurred in conversation with intimate friends to the benefit he had derived from this resolute course of self-denial, and the satisfaction it afforded him in the retrospect. How rarely do even Christian men in similar circumstances possess the courage necessary to recognise their true position, and, instead of indulging in that perilous casuistry so prevalent in our day, that appearances must be kept up or credit will suffer, act on the principle that what is morally wrong cannot be commercially right.'

There were many other illustrations of the same loyalty to conscience exhibited by him in the course of his mercantile career. It is now about twenty-five years since the temperance reformation began to attract attention in this country. Mr. Sturge very soon identified himself with that movement. But as forming a regular branch of the corn trade, his firm had, at that time, large dealings in malt. No sooner, however, did he become convinced of the duty of total abstinence, than he felt the inconsistency of selling an article directly concerned in the production of intoxicating drinks. He, therefore, relinquished at once that part of his trade, and at the same time declined granting the further use of certain cellars on his business premises to a house that had previously hired them for storing wine and spirits. Nor did he stop there. Further reflection led him to doubt how far he could with a clear conscience take any part whatever in the purchase and sale of barley for distilling or malting purposes. The issue was, that he and his partner gave up that department of their business also, and thereby sacrificed large annual profits. This seems to have called forth expressions of astonishment and remonstrance from some of their commercial connections, to which Mr.

Sturge replied in the following quiet and modest circular:—

To C. D., Corn Exchange, London.

‘ Birmingham: 11th month, 5th, 1844.

‘ ESTEEMED FRIEND,—Thy letter of the 4th ultimo has the following remark on the notice contained in our last Monthly Circular:—‘ The singular resolution you have come to, as to not selling malting barley, has been much canvassed here to-day. I regret it much, and the more so as I can discover no good and sound reason for it.’ This observation, and some other circumstances, induce me to give a further explanation why this resolution was adopted, believing that thyself and many other of our friends, though differing in opinion, will not condemn a course which results from a conviction of duty.

Intemperance produces such an incalculable amount of vice and misery, that I consider it right to use my influence to promote the principles of total abstinence. This I feel the more bound to do, as nearly twenty years’ personal experience, and much observation in this and other parts of the world, have convinced me that fermented liquors are not necessary to health, and that those who refrain even from what is termed the moderate use of them are in consequence capable of more bodily and mental exertion, and exempt from many maladies which afflict others.

In accordance with these views, our firm has long altogether declined the sale of malt, or the supply of any grain-distilleries, and converted to other uses cellars which many years ago we let to wine and spirit merchants. Our continuing to take commissions for the sale and purchase of barley for the purpose of malting, has for some years caused me much uneasiness; and I have recently been so fully convinced that it is wrong to do so, that I must have withdrawn from our concern had it not been relinquished. The belief that we are responsible for the means of acquiring, as well as for the use we make of our property, and that we cannot

exercise too rigid a watchfulness over our *own* conduct, is compatible with perfect charity towards those who differ from us in opinion.

‘I am, respectfully,
‘JOSEPH STURGE.’

A further illustration of the high standard of conscientiousness maintained in their trade transactions by Joseph Sturge and his brother, is furnished by the following circumstance which came accidentally to the knowledge of a friend, by whom it has been communicated to us. This friend was staying at an hotel at Harrogate, and having had occasion to write to Joseph Sturge, laid the letter on the table. A gentleman present observing the address, enquired if he were acquainted with Mr. Sturge, and on being informed that they were intimate friends, he remarked —

‘He is one of the most honourable and upright men I know. I reside in Ireland, and am in the corn trade, and have had business transactions with Messrs. Sturge. Some years ago a cargo of grain was passing between us, and by some unavoidable circumstances the vessel met with serious detention, entailing very considerable loss. A question arose between us as to the party on whom the loss should devolve; and not being able to settle it ourselves, it was mutually agreed to refer it. The award was given, and the transaction accordingly arranged. A few months afterwards our firm received a letter from Messrs. Sturge, stating that, on deliberate reconsideration of all the circumstances, they had reached the conclusion that the decision of the referee was unduly in their favour, and they therefore enclosed a draft for 300*l.*, which would be to them an equitable and satisfactory adjustment of the affair.’

In this connection, also, we must advert for a moment to Mr. Sturge's conduct as an employer of labour, availing ourselves largely of Mr. Pumphrey's sketch, &

which we have already been more than once indebted. Though residing upwards of fifty miles from Gloucester, where a large portion of his business lay, he maintained an intimate acquaintance with the circumstances of his people there. He visited them at their houses—no light labour where seventy or eighty families were included—talked to their wives and children; entered with them into their struggles and trials; assisted them by his counsel, and in various other ways; and this not in the exercise of a right, or with an air of patronage, as a master over a servant, but with all the attractive sympathy of a warmly interested friend. Annually he met them with their families at a social tea-party, often numbering between two and three hundred, at which they were addressed by himself and others on various subjects affecting their social, moral, and religious welfare. Nor did they ever return home empty-handed. A packet of judiciously-selected books was presented to each, to be added to their little library; for the reception of which his thoughtful liberality had provided a small book-case in each of their cottages. We need not ask whether he or they were familiar with ‘strikes?’ To them such things were known but by rumour; master and servant were bound together, not only by a common interest, but by warm reciprocal attachment, and the influence which his position over them afforded was exercised by him with no less an object than to win souls to Christ. He was happy, also, in having as his representative at Gloucester his elder brother, Mr. Thomas Sturge, who, with his son, conducted that part of the business, and, being a gentleman of great intelligence and kindness of heart, entered fully into the views of his brothers, and cordially seconded all their

efforts for the well-being of the men under his charge.*

Nor must we omit to advert to another peculiarity which distinguished the character of Joseph Sturge as a man of business. There are many who seem to think that if, in their commercial relations, they observe a rigid integrity, nothing more can be expected of them in that capacity. To drive a hard bargain, to exact with stern severity the uttermost farthing from others, is, they say, with them, a matter of principle, and they seem to think it almost a merit to harden their hearts, in trade transactions, against all considerations of pity or humanity. Far otherwise was it with Joseph Sturge. He did not, indeed, shrink from enforcing his own rights, even by law, where there was obvious injustice and dishonesty. But he was most lenient to misfortune, and sometimes, instead of pressing his own claims against defaulting debtors, he was known to open his purse to relieve them in the day of their distress. We have before us, at this moment, a striking evidence of the

* Lest this should be thought a portraiture drawn by the hand of a too partial friendship, we subjoin an extract from a Gloucester paper, relating to one of the annual meetings of the Messrs. Sturge and their workmen. The testimony is the more honourable, as it comes from a journal whose political views, as is proved in another part of the very article from which we are about to cite, differed widely from theirs. 'In another page,' says this writer, 'we report the proceedings of a tea-party held in this city on Monday evening last. The founders of the festivity were the Messrs. Sturge, corn merchants, of Birmingham and Gloucester, and who, we should be almost tempted to think, are the veritable Brothers Cherubbe, so honourably mentioned by Dickens for their philanthropy and kind consideration of the persons in their service. That very worthy and fraternal firm has been criticised as an extravagant creation of the fancy of the author of "Nicholas Nickleby;" but we are very happy to know that there is at least one firm in real life, and concerned in the actual business affairs of commerce, whose conduct towards their dependants does afford countenance to Mr. Dickens's amiable exaggeration.'

relenting tenderness of his nature even in reference to a case whose turpitude could scarcely be surpassed. A person who had been long intimately connected in business with the firm of which he was the head, and in whom they had placed unlimited confidence, suddenly decamped to America with a large sum of money, and, what was still worse, leaving behind him many bills to which he had forged the signatures of the firm. At the first discovery of this disgraceful transaction, Mr. Sturge wrote to a friend in America to put the officers of justice on the offender's track. Soon after, however, followed another letter, in which he says, 'With regard to ——, though our loss by him was about 50,000 dollars, I am not disposed to take any steps to bring him back to justice.' And when, some months afterwards, the delinquent was apprehended by other agency than that of his firm, it makes one almost smile to hear him say to his friend, though it is a smile assuredly in which there is no bitterness, 'Thou would'st probably see by the newspapers that —— is taken. This I regret, heavy as our loss has been by him, as, from what I have recently heard, I believe that he was suffering even before he was taken for his crimes, perhaps as much as he will by the legal transportation for life which will now probably be his punishment.'

CHAPTER III.

AS A CITIZEN.

His Views of a Christian's Duty as respects Citizenship—Elected a Member of the Birmingham Commissioners—His Objections to Oratorios—Extract from John Newton—Letter to the Commissioners respecting the use of Town Hall for Oratorios—Appeal to the People of Birmingham—His first Appearance in Political Matters—Election at Bridgenorth—Mr. Wolrych Whitmore—Election at Bristol—Mr. Protheroe—The Reform Agitation—Excitement in the Country—The Political Unions—Mr. Sturge joins that at Birmingham—The Justification of himself and his Brother.

MR. STURGE had not been long settled at Birmingham before the worth and weight of his character began to be recognised by his fellow-citizens, who soon invited him to bear part in the administration of their local affairs. Nor was he the man to shrink from the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. Without presuming to censure those who thought differently, Mr. Sturge had a profound conviction that to him it was a part of Christian duty to take an active interest in the affairs of the community among whom he lived, and by personal service and influence to do what in him lay to give to those affairs a direction that should be in harmony with Christian principle, and conducive to the general good. Indeed, nothing was more marked, as we shall often have to observe in the course of this biography, than the decision with which he carried his Christianity with him into all the engagements and relations of his public life. A

early illustration of this was given, after he began to engage in the civic activities of Birmingham. At that time the town had no corporation. The management of its local business was entrusted to a body called the Commissioners of the Birmingham Street Act. Of this body he had been elected member. Among the duties that devolved upon the Commissioners was the erection of a Town Hall, rendered necessary by the growing population and commercial importance of the town. But in the Act of Parliament empowering them to do so, there was a provision which placed the Hall occasionally at the disposal of the Committee of the General Hospital, for the purpose of holding musical festivals in support of that institution. Mr. Sturge had a strong conscientious objection to oratorios, on grounds which he held in common with a large number of religious men of various denominations. Perhaps we could not more fully explain the aspect in which the matter presented itself to his mind than by borrowing the language of John Newton, whose lectures on the Messiah were preached and published at the time of the first Handel festival in 1784, when, according to Cowper—

‘ ten thousand sat
Patiently present at a sacred song,
Commemoration mad ; content to hear
Messiah’s eulogy for Handel’s sake.’

Mr. Sturge reprinted the passage we are about to cite, and circulated it very extensively in Birmingham and the neighbourhood at the time to which we refer.

‘I represent to myself a number of persons of various characters, involved in one common charge of high treason. They are already in a state of confinement, but not yet brought to their trial. The facts, however, are so plain, and the

evidence against them so strong and pointed, that there is not the least doubt of their guilt being fully proved, and that nothing but a pardon can preserve them from punishment. In this situation, it should seem their wisdom to avail themselves of every expedient in their power for obtaining mercy. But they are entirely regardless of their danger, and wholly taken up with contriving methods of amusing themselves, that they may pass away the term of their imprisonment with as much cheerfulness as possible. Among other resources, they call in the assistance of music; and, amidst a great variety of subjects in this way, they are particularly pleased with one. They choose to make the solemnities of their impending trial, the character of their Judge, the methods of his procedure, and the awful sentence to which they are exposed, the groundwork of a musical entertainment; and, as if they were quite unconcerned in the event, their attention is chiefly fixed upon the skill of the composer, in adapting the style of his music to the very solemn language and subject with which they are trifling. The King, however, out of his great clemency and compassion towards those who have no pity for themselves, prevents them with his goodness. Undesired by them, he sends them a gracious message. He assures them that he is unwilling they should suffer; he requires, yea, he entreats them to submit. He points out a way in which their confession and submission shall certainly be accepted; and in this way, which he condescends to prescribe, he offers them a free and full pardon. But, instead of taking a single step towards a compliance with his goodness, they set his message likewise to music; and this, together with a description of their present state, and the fearful doom awaiting them, if they continue obstinate, is sung for their diversion, accompanied by the sound of 'cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of instruments' (Dan. iii. 5). Surely, if such a case as I have supposed could be found in real life, though I might admire the musical taste of these people, I should commiserate their insensibility.'

What, no doubt, added greatly to the repugnance with which Mr. Sturge and others regarded these entertainments was the fact that at that time, though happily it is not so now, the principal parts involving the musical recitation of words referring to the most awful solemnities of religion, were often performed by persons not only of irreligious, but of very questionable moral character. Cherishing such convictions, he deemed it his duty to protest against the appropriation of a building erected by general taxation to purposes so offensive to the religious feelings of a considerable portion of the tax-payers. He sent, therefore, the following circular :—

‘To the Commissioners of the Birmingham Street Act.

‘Sensible as I am that a Town Hall in this large and populous place would be a great public convenience, I am reluctant to appear in any way to oppose the erection of such a building: yet with my views, I cannot feel justified without protesting against its intended connection with the Musical Festival, and I therefore purpose to submit the following resolution to the next meeting of the Commissioners:—

“That no money be expended on the Town Hall with a view to its being appropriated to the performances of the Oratorios, and that an early application be made to Parliament for the repeal of that part of the present Act which places it occasionally under the control of the Musical Committee of the General Hospital.”

‘The present rather unusual mode of giving notice of a motion is adopted to afford every Commissioner an opportunity of examining whether it ought or ought not to be supported, and it will prevent the necessity of my doing more than simply offering it to the meeting. I am fully aware how strong an interest is felt by many of the higher and middle classes of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood in favour of the musical festivals, and should,

therefore, notwithstanding my conviction that there is a large and increasing number who altogether disapprove of such performances, have gladly contented myself with silently withdrawing from your body, if I had conceived such a course to be consistent with an honest discharge of my duty. It is not intended to censure those who sincerely believe it right to encourage oratorios, but it surely cannot be denied that it is a violation of religious liberty to tax persons for their support who conscientiously believe them to be inconsistent with Christianity.

‘Should I fail in my object, and eventually be placed in the painful situation of refusing to pay the rate, I hope that such a course will not be attributed to vexatious opposition, but be referred to its true cause—the necessity which I feel of not voluntarily allowing any portion of my property to be appropriated to a purpose repugnant to my principles.

‘I am, respectfully,

‘JOSEPH STURGE.

‘Edgbaston: 4th Month, 28th, 1830.’

Having failed in carrying his resolution he retired from the Commission, and then issued an appeal, which was signed also by a number of ministers and other gentlemen representing various religious bodies, entreating ‘those who were sincerely desirous of acting consistently with their profession as Christians calmly to consider whether they could with propriety attend’ a performance, involving ‘the profanation of the most serious subjects which the human mind can contemplate, by their application to purposes of amusement.’ Among the names attached to this appeal are those of Thomas Moseley, Timothy East, J. A. James, Thomas Swan, Thomas Morgan, &c. But as it was far from the wish of these gentlemen to injure the charity, on whose behalf this peculiar, and not very profitable, method of raising money was adopted, they appended to their protest an announcement, that ‘a subscription was

intended to be opened, the whole of which would be devoted to the purposes of the General Hospital, whereby those who were desirous of supporting it might have an opportunity of contributing through an unobjectionable channel.' All this did not, of course, deter that class who require to be amused into benevolence from proceeding with their sacred entertainments. But Mr. Sturge felt it his duty to renew his appeals on this subject to the Christian conscience of his fellow-citizens on several subsequent occasions. In one address of a very solemn character, issued immediately after the oratorio was past, he says :—

'The excitement of the festival is over ; retire now to your closets, and with that sacred volume before you, from which the most momentous truths have been extracted, to be sung for your amusement by actors and actresses, and to be mixed up in the same entertainment with the fancy ball and the songs and glees of the stage, ask yourselves the question whether, while believing your eternal happiness to depend upon your personal interest in the death and sufferings of your Redeemer, you can stand guiltless in the sight of God for the sanction and encouragement you have given to the prostitution of this infinitely solemn subject.

'Many of you are parents ; and is this the school where you would wish your children to learn the worship of the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent ? Are not, on the contrary, such exhibitions calculated to confound the distinctions between good and evil in their tender minds ? It is more than probable that, before the return of another festival, some of you will in reality be summoned to the judgment seat of Christ and have received that sentence which shall irrevocably fix your happiness or misery. Do you conceive that the representation of this awful scene, for the diversion of the gay, the frivolous, and the careless, which you have sanctioned, can be a suitable preparation for such a period ? To your own conscience I leave the reply.'

Mr. Sturge very seldom took part in any public discussion without attaching his name to whatever documents he published. But in the early part of this controversy about oratorios, he did, for some unexplained reason, issue one anonymous paper. Though a calm, moderate, Christian appeal, it was met with violent popular outcry. The then Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry (Dr. Ryder) was known to be strongly opposed to oratorios. The local journals, who advocated those entertainments, chose to ascribe the paper in question to the Rev. Mr. Hodson, the Bishop's chaplain, who sympathised with his diocesan's views. On the strength of this assumption, he was assailed with great bitterness. Lampoons were written against him, and it was reported that he had been openly insulted in the streets. When Mr. Sturge found that another was thus suffering contumely on account of his act, he instantly avowed the authorship, and ever after determined to brave in his own person whatever reproach might attach to the promulgation of such unpopular opinions.

It was not long, however, before circumstances occurred which were to test his moral courage far more severely. It was his lot to attain maturity at a period of extraordinary political excitement, of which, moreover, Birmingham happened to be the very centre and focus. Mr. Sturge never had that superstitious dread of politics, as something 'common or unclean,' which many good men profess. Whenever an opportunity offered to render service to what he deemed sound political principle, he did not hesitate for an instant as to, not only his right, but his duty as a religious man, to use such an opportunity to the utmost. His first active exertions of this nature were put forth in

connection with a contested election at Bridgenorth. The candidate, whose cause he espoused, was Mr. Wolryche Whitmore. Mr. Whitmore was not an ordinary man. At a time when the doctrines of free trade were understood and accepted by scarcely one in ten thousand, he, an hereditary landowner, brought up amid all the strong prejudices of a country gentleman of that day, had, nevertheless, by an independent study of the principles of political economy, worked his way to a clear perception, which he was not slow boldly to avow, of the manifold evils of the corn laws, which most men of his class regarded as the very palladium of our national security and greatness. He was, moreover, a most enlightened and resolute opponent of slavery. Here were two points of sympathy by which Mr. Sturge was powerfully attracted to the side of Mr. Whitmore. In the year 1830 that gentleman was candidate for the representation of Bridgenorth. Under the system which then prevailed the voters for boroughs might be, and often were, scattered over the whole kingdom. A large number of the Bridgenorth voters resided at Birmingham and its neighbourhood. To canvass and collect and carry these to the poll became, therefore, a service of great importance, which might be rendered by the friends of the respective candidates. Mr. Sturge threw himself into the work with uncommon ardour, and spent much time and no little money in aiding his fellow-townsmen to go and vote for the man who advocated Free Trade and the Abolition of Slavery. Mr. Whitmore was returned.

He had an opportunity of rendering a similar service about the same time to another liberal candidate, who stood forward to contest the City of Bristol on Anti-

slavery principles. Mr. Protheroe, though himself a West India proprietor, had, by force of conviction, become an ardent abolitionist. This of course roused against him the hostility of the interest he had forsaken, which was very powerful amongst the constituents in that city. But it inspired Mr. Sturge with earnest zeal on his behalf, and he worked indefatigably to collect the out-lying voters and carry them to Bristol, though in this instance his efforts were unsuccessful.

But other times were at hand of far more serious and general agitation. It is difficult for us in these days, when it has become the fashion to affect a sort of cynical indifference to all public, and especially to all popular questions, to understand the intense excitement which convulsed the country thirty years ago on the subject of political reform. If we would rightly appreciate the course taken by the men of that generation, we must try to put ourselves in the position they occupied during the awful period which elapsed from the end of 1830 to the middle of 1832. Many things concurred to render it one of those eras which move men's souls to their depths.

The country, beginning to recover from the moral and physical collapse which had followed the long agony of the French war, was directing its attention more and more to those flagrant abuses in our political institutions from which it had been purposely diverted thirty-seven years before by military interventions in the affairs of our neighbours.* George IV., whose

* 'The passions were excited; democratic ambition was awakened; the desire of power under the name of Reform was rapidly gaining ground among the middle ranks, and the institutions of the country were threatened with an overthrow as violent as that which had recently taken place in the French monarchy. In these circumstances, the only

character, personal and political, had lain like an incubus on the heart of the nation, was dead, and the accession of the 'Sailor-king' was hailed with more, perhaps, of enthusiasm than reason, as the certain dawn of a better day. The memorable 'three days' in Paris had just passed, and the energy with which the French people had thrown off the tyranny of the elder Bourbons, imposed upon them by the arms of Europe, had awakened the deepest sympathy throughout these islands, and greatly stimulated the desire for reform at home. What was necessary to condense this vague desire into an indignant and passionate resolve, was supplied by the Duke of Wellington's obstinate resistance to any concession whatever to the popular will, combined with his declaration, which outraged the common sense of the whole country, that human wisdom could not devise so perfect a system of representation as then existed, 'for the nature of man was incapable of reaching such excellence at once.' It is not necessary here to describe the struggle that ensued, and which, for nearly two years, rendered it doubtful whether the change that was inevitably impending would issue in a reform or a revolution.

The excitement reached its climax when in May, 1832, the ministry of Lord Grey was defeated in the House of Lords. It was not a time when any man with a spark of patriotism in his bosom could stand aloof in indifference or neutrality. Mr. Sturge at once took his part with characteristic boldness and decision. The most remarkable offspring of that period of excitement were

mode of checking this evil, was by engaging in a foreign contest, by drawing off the ardent spirits into active service, and, in lieu of the modern desire for innovation, raising the ancient gallantry of the British nation.'—*Alison's History of Europe*, vol. iv. p. 7.

the political unions, voluntary associations of the middle and working classes, formed for the purpose of supporting and enforcing the demand for reform. The first of these, we believe, was organised at Birmingham under the auspices of Mr. Thomas Atwood, who afterwards represented the borough in parliament. Mr. Sturge, having satisfied himself that its objects were just, and the means it employed legal and peaceable, joined this body soon after its formation, an example which, at a later period, was followed by large numbers of the most intelligent and wealthy of the middle classes. But it exposed him to great misconstruction and reproach at the time, especially from some of the members of his own Society. The nature of the political unions was, no doubt, very imperfectly understood by those worthy persons, who imagined there could be no agitation without violence. But it is now clear enough that those peaceful and powerful associations—rendered so by the presence among them of men like Mr. Sturge—contributed more than anything else to restrain outbreaks of violence, and to secure the orderly accomplishment of the national will.

‘The vast population of Leeds, Birmingham, and Manchester (says Miss Martineau, in her “History of the Thirty-Years’ Peace”), and countless hosts of intelligent tradesmen and artisans elsewhere, sent shoals of petitions to Parliament for a reform of the House of Commons; and they did something more effectual by forming Political Unions, or preparing for their immediate formation in case of need. This was the force which kept the peace, and preserved us from disastrous revolution.’

The charge brought against Mr. Sturge was, that in joining the union, he was violating the laws of his own Society. In refutation of this charge he and his brother

John, who was involved in the same condemnation, published the following letter :—

Birmingham: 5th month, 10th, 1832.

‘A paragraph (sent, we understand, by an individual whose name is withheld from us) having appeared in the last “Birmingham Gazette,” stating that, of the members of the Society of Friends, “three or four young men only have in the moment of excitement been induced to enrol their names (as members of the Political Union), and that they have done so in direct violation of the advices of the Society, issued for the government of its members in times in which the public feeling may be agitated by civil and political questions of general interest,”—we, as two of the parties so designated, consider it our duty to give a direct contradiction to the statement in all its particulars.

‘Not only is the number of those who have signed the declaration understated, and their character incorrectly described, but we deny that the step they took was any violation of the letter or spirit of the “Advices of the Society.”

‘The advices alluded to were issued at various periods since the origin of the Society, and for the most part had reference to the particular circumstances of the day. Their general tenor is to recommend a respectful obedience to the king and the constituted authorities (in all points not interfering with conscience), and to caution our members against being “ensnared by the animosity of contending parties,” with a particular reference to contested elections, the practices of which they strongly condemn. It will be obvious to any candid reader on perusing them that they were not intended, and cannot be fairly construed to apply to, every participation in political affairs, but only to such as are characterised by unlawful practices and an unchristian spirit.

‘In the very same paragraph from which the expressions quoted in the “Gazette” have been taken, we find the following words: “He (the Christian) will not be improperly solicitous for his own ease and security when he sees difficulties or

trouble threatening those around him." Now we should be extremely sorry were it to go forth to the world that there existed anything either in the principles or the practice of the Society of Friends which forbids its members from joining their fellow-countrymen in a peaceable cooperation for the recovery of their political rights, and that at the present crisis it should be thought that they did not, as a body, deeply sympathise with the almost unanimous desire of the nation for parliamentary reform, on which so many of the dearest interests of humanity depend, or were unwilling, as far as is consistent with the peaceable principles of the Gospel, to share in the difficulties and dangers attendant on the effort for obtaining it.

'Equally unfounded is the imputation conveyed in the expressions, "induced in the moment of excitement to enrol their names," &c., which, coupled with what precedes and follows them, are obviously intended to give the impression that we were weakly led by the influence of others to commit an act opposed to the principles of the Society of Friends, which in calmer moments we should regret.

'We consider it a libel on the Society to impute to it principles which forbid its members, at a crisis like the present, from associating with their fellow-countrymen in any manner not inconsistent with the doctrines of the Gospel which they deem the most conducive to the public good. We do not pledge ourselves to defend all the past proceedings of the Political Union; but we assert, without fear of contradiction, that the main object for which it was formed, and the sole object for which we have joined it, is one which nine-tenths of the members of our Society cordially approve; while in its rules and regulations we find nothing which a Christian can condemn.

'We take for example the 1st, 2nd, and 6th articles of the duties incurred by the members of the Political Union, which are as follows:

"1st. To be good, faithful, and loyal subjects to the king.

"2nd. To obey the laws of the land, and, where they cease to protect the rights, liberties, and interests of the community,

to endeavour to get them changed by just, legal, and peaceful means only.

“6th. To bear in mind that the strength of our Society consists in the peace, order, unity, and legality of our proceedings; and to consider all persons as enemies who shall in any way invite or promote violence, discord, or any illegal or doubtful measures.”

‘Add to these an additional regulation, adopted soon afterwards:

“That the basis of this Union being a strict and dutiful obedience to the laws, any act or proceeding of any person or persons which may not be in strict conformity with the laws is altogether disowned and rejected by this Union, and declared to be utterly void as to all persons, save such as personally and individually take part in such act or proceeding, and every such person is hereby declared to cease to be a member of this Union, and his expulsion is hereby declared accordingly.”

‘All the other regulations are consistent with the above; and we ask, can anything be more opposed to disorder and violence? Can anything more effectually tend to secure peaceful obedience to the laws at the present awful crisis, and during the still more fearful times which we have reason to dread, than the influence of an association comprising the great bulk of the lower and a large portion of the middle classes, and binding its members to such a line of conduct as this? We think not; and we have therefore felt it a duty to give it our feeble support by enrolling our names among its members; and in doing so we have acted in the manner most conducive, in our opinion, to the great end of averting the evils which threaten our beloved country.

‘So far from repenting the act, we feel convinced, on the most mature reflection, and with a knowledge of what has since occurred, that it was not only right in itself, but that the great accession to the Union which took place was peculiarly well timed. Far be it from us to condemn others who take different views and have adopted another line of conduct; we allow them the same freedom of judgment which we claim

for ourselves. Efforts of various kinds may all work in harmony to promote the same great object; but we earnestly entreat all those persons, whether members of our own or any other Society, who have hitherto been satisfied in doing nothing, to ask themselves the serious question, whether, at such a period, they fulfil the duties of a citizen and a Christian if they any longer withhold their public support from the cause of peace, order, and social improvement?

‘JOSEPH STURGE.’

‘JOHN STURGE.’

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY ANTI-SLAVERY LABOUR.

Long Interval between the Abolition of the Slave Trade and Agitation against Slavery—Reasons for this—Absorbing Nature of the great War—Necessity of preventing the Evasion of the Slave Trade Abolition Act—Measures adopted to this End—Mr. Brougham's Bill for making the Slave Trade Felony—Mr. Stephen's Slave Registration Act—Mr. Zachary Macaulay at the Congress of Vienna—The Question of Slavery in the West India Colonies comes gradually before the Country and Parliament—Debates in the House of Commons—Cruelties of the System brought to Light—Perverseness of the Colonial Legislatures and Press—Persecution of the Missionaries—Necessity for a more popular Element in the Anti-Slavery Party—Character of 'The African Institution' and the old Anti-Slavery Society—Joseph Sturge well adapted to be the Leader of the Popular Party—Mr. Buxton's first Motion on the Subject in Parliament—Extracts from Mr. Sturge's Journal—Remarkable Discussion at Friends' Yearly Meeting—His Acquaintance with James Cropper and their public Cooperation—Extracts from the Letters of the latter—Joseph Sturge adopts the Principle of immediate Abolition—His Address at the Friends' Yearly Meeting in 1830.

VERY soon, however, Mr. Sturge's attention began to be more and more directed to that department of benevolent labour in which he was destined to achieve the most important services to the cause of humanity. We allude, of course, to the question of slavery in our West India Colonies.

It has often been remarked as somewhat strange, that so long an interval should have been permitted to elapse between the abolition of the Slave Trade and any serious attempt being made for the extinction of

slavery. The former event took place in the year 1807, and it was not until 1823 that Mr. Buxton submitted to the House of Commons the first resolution ever moved in that Assembly that brought in question, and then only in a very cautious form, the lawfulness of negro slavery. Various reasons, however, may be assigned for this comparative inaction, not the least important of which was the fact, that during the period referred to the public mind was so engrossed with that terrible conflict going on between this country and France, and the disastrous consequences that resulted from it, that it had little time or energy to spare for anything else. For this is one among many other miserable fruits of war, that it tends to make nations selfish, and to withdraw their thoughts from all measures of domestic improvement or philanthropic reform, to the one absorbing and passionate care for their own safety or glory. While the country was bleeding at every pore, or lying exhausted with the wounds it had received during twenty years' strife—how was it possible to engage the sympathies of the people on behalf of a poor and despised race, whose sufferings, however severe, they might well imagine at that time hardly surpassed their own? Nor does it appear, indeed, that the excellent men who laboured so long and so successfully to put the traffic in men under the ban of law and opinion, ever contemplated speedy emancipation as a thing either practicable or safe, though, no doubt, they expected that the abolition of the slave trade would ultimately, and by a necessary though very gradual process, lead to the overthrow of slavery. Their first efforts, therefore, after the victory of 1807, were confined to securing such supplementary legislation as was thought necessary to prevent the

provisions of the Abolition Act from being evaded. And truly there was much yet to do in this direction. For as the offence of importing slaves into the royal dominions, prohibited under that act, was only punishable by pecuniary penalties and forfeitures, it was soon found that many British subjects, willing to run the risk of such penalties for the sake of the enormous profits made, were still engaged in the traffic. To put a stop to this, Mr. Brougham, in 1811, introduced a bill, which was carried through both Houses of Parliament, declaring the slave trade to be felony, the offender being liable to fourteen years' transportation, or imprisonment for five years. But even this law, admirable and effective as it proved to be in its general operation, still left open a loophole for evasion, since one of its clauses excluded the intercolonial slave trade from its jurisdiction. To meet and remedy the abuses to which this omission gave rise, the Slave Registration Act was passed in 1819, principally through the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Stephen. Nor was it a small gain that, through the influence of the Anti-Slavery party in England—in that instance represented chiefly by Mr. Zachary Macaulay—an article was inserted in the treaty of Vienna, pronouncing solemn condemnation upon the slave trade, and binding the great Powers, who were parties to that instrument, to labour together for its extinction.

Engaged thus in consolidating and extending the triumph they had won over the infamous traffic itself, the Anti-Slavery party, for many years, suffered the other part of the question to remain in abeyance. By degrees, however, attention began to be directed more and more to the condition of the slaves in our West India colonies. There were frequent discussions raised

on this subject in the House of Commons by a band of as able and earnest men as ever espoused the advocacy of any cause, including the names of Wilberforce, Brougham, Lushington, Denman, Whitmore, William Smith, and, above all, Buxton, whose vigilance nothing escaped. During the two sessions of 1824-5, no fewer than eight motions were brought forward by these gentlemen, tending to show, in one aspect or another, the flagrant evils of slavery. Perhaps the most important of them all was that relating to the trial and sentence of the missionary Smith, in Demerara. It was introduced by Mr. Brougham on the 1st of June, 1824, in a speech of extraordinary power, which was, however, almost surpassed by the reply with which he closed the adjourned debate on the 11th of the same month. This motion gave rise to a debate of memorable eloquence, in which the cause of the oppressed was admirably maintained by (in addition to the mover) Sir James Mackintosh, Dr. Lushington, Mr. J. Williams, Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. Denman. These discussions in Parliament could not fail to produce great effect, in gradually educating the public mind for the issue that was inevitable. Out of doors, also, the writings of Mr. Clarkson, Mr. Zachary Macaulay, Mr. Stephen, and Mr. Cropper, were awakening enquiry and reflection in many minds, especially among the more intelligent and religious classes. 'Still,' as Sir George Stephen remarks in his 'Anti-Slavery Recollections,' 'nothing was said about emancipation, or, if said, it was in a whisper. Colonial abuses, colonial obduracy, colonial hypocrisy, were the only topics for agitation, but colonial castigation and colonial emancipation were tabooed.' But from the year 1823 forward, many events contributed to awaken the slumbering conscience of the nation as

to the guilt of slavery. Facts of a very startling nature were brought to light from time to time, revealing the revolting cruelties practised by men, aye, and by women, on the unfortunate slaves whom the system placed at their mercy. But more than all other causes, was the infatuated perverseness of the planters and the colonial legislatures, who seemed as if they studiously selected in every case the course best adapted to rouse public indignation in the mother country. Their wilful evasion in some cases, their open defiance in others, of the various measures recommended by the Home Government for improving the condition of the slaves, gradually angered against them even the official class, otherwise sufficiently disposed to treat them with extreme leniency. The tone of insolent effrontery with which the colonial press defended the wildest abuses of the slave system, provoked the resentment of many who might not have been hostile to the institution of slavery in itself. But more than all, the furious persecution of the missionaries, displayed by the destruction of their chapels, their own wanton imprisonment, or expulsion from the islands, and culminating at last in what was, in effect, the judicial murder of Smith, 'the Demerara martyr,' helped, by degrees, to prepare the country for that cry of total and immediate emancipation which a few earnest spirits were already beginning to raise.

It became gradually apparent, however, that other influences and agencies than those hitherto employed must be pressed by the anti-slavery party into the service of their cause, before the great battle upon which they were now entering could be won. Hardly any eulogy can exceed the merits of those admirable men who first brought, and afterwards resolutely kept,

the slave question before Parliament and the public for nearly forty years. But for the most part they were, both from position and temper, somewhat cautious and conservative. Their reliance for success was, in a main degree, upon aristocratic patronage, parliamentary diplomacy, and private influence with men in office. There was a curious illustration of this afforded in the constitution of the Society they formed to promote their objects after the passing of the Abolition Act in 1807. It was called '*The African Institution*,' its object being 'the improvement of Africa and the extinction of the slave trade.' It consisted almost exclusively of members of the nobility and gentry. Its president was a prince of the blood; its thirty-six vice-presidents were nearly all lords; and its secretary was a member of parliament, below which station the association does not seem to have condescended to look for aid. That this body rendered some service to the cause, while the scene of operation was confined to Downing Street, is likely enough; but when it was found, as the more sagacious of the party now began to find, that the only hope of carrying the stronghold of the great iniquity with which they battled, guarded as it was by so many formidable interests and prejudices, was by evoking a moral insurrection among the people, such a body as we have described was found utterly unfitted for the work that was to be done. Accordingly it died of its own dignity in the year 1827. Even the *Anti-Slavery Society*, which succeeded it, though it had a larger infusion of the popular element, was a good deal fettered in its action by the same timid and fastidious spirit which had marked its predecessor. It was greatly addicted to moderation, compromise, and delay. It shrank from placing the great issue of total and imme-

diate abolition fairly before the country. It deprecated extreme measures and feared popular agitation. It was, therefore, necessary that another order of men, of bolder and more robust, if somewhat less refined, natures should now appear and take the work in hand, not so much to supersede as to supplement the exertions of their more wary and hesitating colleagues. For this species of service Joseph Sturge was pre-eminently qualified; not, indeed, that he had the commanding eloquence which could rouse and control large bodies of men, but he was a thorough man of the people. He had none of the aristocratic fastidiousness, or of the conservative apprehension, which draws back from contact with the masses. He had strong faith in the soundness of the popular instinct, when wisely guided, on all broad questions of humanity and right. He had no nervous fear of the noise and excitement that accompany a popular agitation. He was, moreover, a man of great moral courage, did not shrink from responsibility when following the voice of conscience, and was endowed, withal, with a purpose so resolute that no difficulties could daunt him, and an activity so indefatigable that no amount of labour seemed capable of exhausting him. And finally, he had a singular power of impressing others with a sense of his own perfect sincerity and simplicity of character, and so of winning their confidence and securing their cooperation for the objects he had at heart.

It was in the year 1823, as we have already intimated, that the question of Negro slavery was, for the first time, brought before the House of Commons. 'Public feeling,' says Mr. Charles Buxton, in the Memoirs of his father, 'was roused into activity, and petitions began to flow in; the lead was taken by the Society of Friends, and

it was determined that the presentation of their appeal by the hands of Mr. Wilberforce should be the opening of the parliamentary campaign.' In doing so, he stated that his efforts against the slave trade had commenced thirty years ago, by the presentation of a similar petition from the same body. It so happens, also, that the first allusion we find to this question in Mr. Sturge's papers, bears reference to this very document with which Mr. Wilberforce introduced the question of slavery to the House of Commons. In some rough notes he took of the proceedings of the Friends' Yearly Meeting in London for 1823, is the following entry: 'The petition to the House of Commons was read, and some very interesting remarks made on the state of slavery by William Allen, John Wilkinson, James Cropper, and a number of other Friends.' From that moment the subject took strong possession of his mind. His interest in it was continually nourished by the discussions which took place, almost annually, at the Friends' Yearly Meeting, and especially by the close personal intercourse which soon grew up between him and Mr. James Cropper of Liverpool. Among his papers is an elaborate report, written by himself, of a long and very earnest discussion of the whole question, which took place at the Yearly Meeting for 1824. Among those who bore part in that conversation we find the honoured names—most of them now illustrious in the annals of philanthropic fame—of William Allen, Luke Howard, Richard Phillips, Joseph Gurney, Joseph John Gurney, and Josiah Forster; but the master-spirit of the occasion was James Cropper. He delivered a powerful address, in which he displayed a perfect acquaintance with the subject in all its bearings. He showed how the African slave trade, though prohibited by British

law, was still carried on to a large extent, and with aggravated horrors. He described the abominations of the internal traffic in slaves practised in the United States of America, and then went on to declare, in the most emphatic language, his conviction that there was only one way of effectually stopping the slave trade, and that was by the utter abolition of slavery itself. More than once, during the course of his address, he was so overcome by his feelings as to be unable to proceed; indeed, throughout the whole of this remarkable sitting, a tone of deep religious solemnity seems to have pervaded the minds of all the speakers, so that we need not wonder to find Mr. Sturge closing his report with the remark that 'during the discussion, and particularly while James Cropper was speaking, an almost intense degree of interest was shown, and the numbers present far exceeded those at any of the previous sittings.'

From this time forward Joseph Sturge was irrevocably committed to the cause of the slave, and soon began to enter upon that long series of active services in connection with it which ended only with life. In 1826 he was appointed secretary to the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society. For some years, as most accordant with his modest nature, his labours were comparatively private, following the lead and acting under the direction of that admirable man to whom we have just adverted. A few brief extracts from his diary for 1826 will afford us a glimpse of him at this period.

1st Month, 23rd.—'Went in the morning with James Cropper to a meeting at Wednesbury on Anti-slavery, and dined at S. Lloyd's, jun. In the evening attended a meeting at J. A. James's, where J. C. addressed an audience of probably more than 2,000 persons.'

24th.—‘At Wolverhampton with J. C. at a meeting, which was but thinly attended.’

26th.—‘Went to Dudley in the morning with Eliza Cropper, Arnold Buffum, and brother John, to attend an Anti-Slavery meeting, where we met James Cropper. The meeting was very satisfactory.’

27th.—‘About ten o’clock went with J. and E. C. in a chaise to Hereford, where we arrived between four and five. After dinner at J. Benbaw’s, attended a meeting, where there was a numerous and respectable company, to whom J. Cropper’s statements appeared to give general satisfaction.’

30th.—‘In the evening had a select meeting at the King’s Head, Gloucester, on the Slavery question, when J. Cropper stated his views, in accordance with which a petition was adopted, and an attempt to promote a county meeting concluded upon.’

31st.—‘Went to Stroud and attended a numerous meeting, which was very satisfactory, and a petition was resolved upon.’

We find, also, that during these early years, from 1826 onward, he was in active correspondence with Mr. Zachary Macaulay, who was at that time the main-spring of the anti-slavery movement in London. A considerable number of the letters of this able and excellent man to Mr. Sturge are still extant. They contain information on a variety of points connected with the subject of slavery, and the measures taken by the committee in London for bringing the matter before Parliament, together with grateful acknowledgments of the services rendered to the cause by their provincial allies. It is obvious, moreover, from the tone of some of them, that the younger and more ardent party, to which Mr. Sturge belonged, were already suggesting certain methods of popular action which were not quite in harmony with the somewhat measured and formal proceedings that were then in favour at head-quarters. It is very

pleasant, however, to observe how completely the young man's energy and the old man's caution were alike under the guidance of the purest and most disinterested motives, and subordinated to the great end which they had both so earnestly at heart.

Unhappily, we are not in possession of the materials necessary to illustrate the manifold activities of Mr. Sturge in the anti-slavery cause during the next few years. The brief diaries from which we have hitherto occasionally quoted, cease almost entirely about this time. His sister Sophia, who was his confidante and counsellor in all his public labours, died in the year 1845. His letters to her would have contained, no doubt, a complete chronicle of the journeys, meetings, and various exertions by which, in conjunction with many kindred spirits, he laboured so hard during the period in question, to evoke, organise, and direct that formidable force of public opinion, which gradually gathered such volume and momentum as sufficed to sweep away clean before it the whole system of slavery in the British colonies. But after his sister's death, Mr. Sturge unhappily destroyed all his own letters to her.

From a singularly interesting memoir of Mr. James Cropper which has never been published, but only lithographed for the use of his friends, we are kindly permitted by his family to extract a few passages from some letters written by him to Mr. Sturge between the years 1825 and 1830, showing how early and how earnestly they were working together in this enterprise of humanity. To Mr. Cropper, indeed, belongs the honour of having been the first missionary of abolitionism in England,* devoting himself for years to the

* That is, the first who spoke and lectured upon it in public.

task of stimulating the torpid conscience of the nation, and visiting, for this purpose, most of the large cities and towns of the kingdom.

Liverpool: 10th month, 14th, 1825.

‘When I leave home again I shall probably remain out for some months, if my health permits, and if there is a disposition generally to enter into the subject. The large towns, and especially where the leading people are intelligent, are the great points; but we can talk about the towns in your neighbourhood when we meet. If I had time for it, I should like to go to every town and village in the country where they would be willing to hear me; but as we cannot do all, we must do the best we can. It does me good to feel there are persons who feel so warmly in the great cause as to be willing to accompany me to the neighbouring towns. The work is truly great, and I trust the labourers will increase.

‘I am, with great regard,

‘Thy sincere friend,

‘JAMES CROPPER.’

Six weeks later there is another letter, from which we give two or three extracts.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—Thy letter of the 23rd arrived before I reached home. I think your resolutions, passed at the meeting at Birmingham, are excellent, and will not fail to do good as an example. After leaving Birmingham thou wouldst hear of the meeting at Coventry from R. Cadbury. It was not so numerous as could have been wished, but still calculated, I hope, to do good. We had a more select meeting at Leicester, where there was an excellent feeling, and I hope they will have a county meeting. Public meetings are the best means of spreading knowledge on the subject, and when we have done that, the burden rests on the country if they continue to support so wicked a system, at the expense of such enormous sacrifices. At Derby we had an excellent meeting, much better than was anticipated; very good feeling was general, and I hope they will have both town and country

meetings. At Nottingham there are some warm friends of our cause; but some of the leading Whigs either take no interest, or are against us. They decided on a town meeting, of which I am glad; for it is time that the advocates of slavery, if there are any such, should show themselves. We have nothing to fear from bringing our cause before the public. . . . With respect to Bristol, I rather doubt the propriety of my attempting anything further there; we must be careful not to push too much in any one place; at least so it seems to me. There are plenty of intelligent and well-disposed Friends who are very able, and I hope very willing, to do what they can. If I should come in that direction, it will be a great gratification to me to meet thee, and a great support to the cause to have thy help anywhere.

‘Thy sincerely affectionate friend,

‘JAMES CROPPER.

‘I by no means wish to discourage thee from any efforts to serve the cause in Bristol. I am convinced thy labours have been highly useful. It is delightful to contemplate how one takes one part, and another another. The part I am now taking I should have thought myself least suited for.’

Passing over several other letters relating to similar labours, we insert the following, because it contains the first reference to that demand for ‘immediate emancipation,’ which Mr. Sturge and some others were now becoming convinced was the only cry by which the country could be effectually roused for the struggle before them:—

Liverpool: 3rd month, 30th, 1830.

. ‘With respect to the anti-slavery cause, I think it is beginning to be generally felt that the time is come for the advocates of the cause to unite in some definite plan. With this view, the [Anti-Slavery] Society in London are publishing the three plans—the emancipation of the children—the purchase of the women—

and the plan proposed by myself. They were sent to me by Macaulay marked "private," but I presume they will be circulated amongst those friends of the cause who have thought much on the subject. I see no feeling in the country, and especially in either House, to make me think immediate emancipation could be carried. If a majority of the people were virtuous, and loved justice more than their own interest, then I should hope to see slavery extinguished at once, but, taking men as they are, I have no hope of its extinction by any act of the legislature which does not comprise compensation, or rather redemption.

'It is a little curious that the three different plans of emancipation are at nearly the same cost to the country, say about 500,000*l.* per annum. It cannot be denied that mine extinguishes slavery soonest; it is nearest the plan proposed by Government, and I believe will prove most agreeable to the West Indians. . . .'

But Mr. Sturge had now made up his own mind conclusively, that he would be no party to demanding or accepting anything less than total and immediate emancipation. For this he suffered some reproach, as being an extreme and impracticable man. But, in truth, in acting thus, on the present and other occasions, he was simply obeying what was a necessity of his nature; he was emphatically a man of action, and that he might act with decision and energy it was imperative that he should be able to present the issue to his own mind in the form of some simple principle resting upon moral conviction. When his intellect was distracted with subtle schemes of expediency and compromise, and when his conscience was entangled in the meshes of a refined and ingenious casuistry, he felt himself paralysed and powerless for all practical effort.

The first step which Mr. Sturge took, after he had reached the conclusion just stated, was to endeavour to

bring over to his views the members of his own Society, who were then, as they had always been, and continued to be to the end of the struggle, the soul and sinew of the anti-slavery enterprise. Accordingly, at the Friends' Yearly Meeting in 1830, he delivered an earnest address, imploring his brethren to take more decisive ground than they had hitherto done on this question. As he has left the notes of that address among his papers, it is inserted here, not only as possessing considerable interest in itself, but as indicating very clearly that simple fealty to principle on which he was wont to act on all matters of importance.

'As I have, after much reflection upon the subject, felt a strong persuasion that, whatever may have been the case with the Anti-slavery Society, we, as a religious body, by taking gradual and not immediate emancipation as our motto, seven years ago, have not only in some degree retarded the great object we have in view, but have allowed a subject which we professed to take up upon principle to merge into a question of expediency, I wish briefly to refer to what then was said by two or three Friends, whose opinions had, I believe, so much weight with many of us, that we took for granted their opinions must be correct, without properly examining for ourselves—at least this was a good deal my case. As those dear Friends, of course, had nothing in view in delivering the sentiments they then did but the welfare of the slaves, so if they are found not to rest on a correct basis, I believe they would willingly retract them. If I recollect right, we were then told that if immediate emancipation were granted, not only would the personal property of the master be endangered, but the boon conferred on the slave in his degraded state would be a curse rather than a blessing to him; that as wisdom dwelt with prudence, if we had a friend who had been long confined in a dungeon, and wholly excluded from light, we should not at once expose him to the bright rays of the meridian sun. But I think few would admit that it would

be that prudence which dwells with true wisdom which would induce us to leave this friend immured in the dungeon, but still in the hands of his merciless jailor, who not only openly declared his determination to keep him where he was, but that he would use his utmost exertions to disqualify him for any other situation. It should be clearly understood that the advocates of immediate emancipation do not thereby mean lawless, uncontrolled liberty, but they say: Grant us only the personal liberty of the slave, and then subject him to such laws as those most interested in his happiness shall think best suited to promote it.

‘Another Friend said that, if we urged immediate emancipation, we should be in danger of having all the horrors of St. Domingo acted over again. Now, though I consider this was satisfactorily answered at the time, there is still reason to suppose that an erroneous opinion prevails on this subject even in the minds of many Friends. It is true that some of the pages of the early history of the Independence of Hayti are written in characters of blood and of fire; but it cannot too strongly be borne in mind that this was not the result of the sudden emancipation of the whole of the then degraded slave population, but that it was the crusade sent by Buona-parté against her newly-acquired independence, which, though it failed of success, dyed her rivers with blood and whitened her fields with the bones of the slain. Before this took place, the slaves not only remained peaceable, but continued to work on the same estates and for their former masters; and the most determined opponent of immediate emancipation may be safely challenged to produce a single instance in which that sudden and general removal of the yoke of slavery from about 300,000 individuals was attended with injury. It is of great importance that every one should have correct information on this point, because facts are safer to act upon than theory; and though all the experiments that have been tried tend to the same result, yet this only was on a scale that would be at all comparable to our West India slave population; and the history of St. Domingo, from the commencement of its independence to the present time, may be considered a

triumphant refutation of all those who say immediate emancipation is dangerous.

'It does appear to me, on the fullest investigation, that those who oppose it are backed by neither sound principles nor facts; while those who advocate it are not only supported by sound principles, but every fact on record tends to prove the perfect safety of acting upon them.

'There is, however, one view of this subject which, I think, at least ought to be conclusive with us as a religious body. We hold it to be right that whenever we take up anything on religious principles, we should act upon it, without reference to consequences. Now, it has been said, and I believe unanimously admitted within these walls, and I am sure my own heart responded to the sentiment, that the abolition of slavery had been the *religious* concern of our Society for more than half a century; but I believe it will be found by everyone that will fairly examine the subject, that if this be correct, we must advocate immediate emancipation, and that the reasons for any kind or modification of gradual emancipation are founded only on expediency. It would only be a waste of time in such an assembly as this to show that the interest of a few planters in this country should not, for one moment, be put in competition with all that is dear to 800,000 negroes, merely because the Atlantic rolls between us and them, or on account of the colour of their skin or the woolliness of their hair. Otherwise it might be shown that notwithstanding the enormous sacrifices this country is making to uphold this monstrous system, nothing will preserve the planters themselves from ultimate ruin but the emancipation of their slaves; and such is the dreadfully demoralising effect upon those who reside in the slave colonies that, viewing them with the eye of a Christian and as accountable beings, they are far more to be pitied than the victims of their oppression. T. Clarkson's observation many years ago with regard to those engaged in the slave-trade is equally applicable to slavery, that the effects it produces are regular and certain, they are irresistible; so that neither public opinion, nor the improvement of one age above another, nor the superior refinement

of any particular people, can withstand their influence. There is no remedy for the evils complained of but the total extinction of the system; no human regulations can do away with them because no human regulations can change the human heart. Let us then not hesitate any longer to proclaim to the world that we cannot stop short of urging final and immediate emancipation. When the Christian is convinced that the principle upon which he acts is correct, I believe it does not become him to examine too closely his probability of success, but rather to act in the assurance that if he faithfully does his part, as much success will attend his efforts as is consistent with the will of that Divine leader under whose banner he is enlisted. But I derive encouragement from the conviction that these views are rapidly spreading; though I am not one of those who wished to see exactly such a motion then carried, yet when an individual came forward the other day unsanctioned by the Anti-slavery Committee to propose a resolution to the effect that all children born in the king's dominions after the commencement of 1831 should be free, it was cheering to witness how it touched a chord that vibrated in a thousand bosoms, and had the proposition been that slavery should then cease for ever, I think it would have been echoed from nearly as many quarters;* and though the West Indian body may again attempt to bribe the ministers of the Crown by another and another splendid dinner at the Albion with all its costly viands and dulcet strains of soothing speeches, I feel fully persuaded that if the abolitionists keep steadily at their posts and act upon right principles, the doom of slavery is settled. I hope Friends will excuse my having so largely trespassed on the time of the meeting, as I felt that my own peace was in some degree concerned in endeavouring, however imperfectly, to bring this view of the subject before the meeting. If I have spoken strongly I trust the reflection that during the seven years since we came to the conclusion to advocate gradual and not immediate emancipation, tens of thousands have been sent by this horrid system to an un-

* The incident referred to here is explained in the following chapter.

timely grave, must plead my apology. How much of the blood of these will be required at the hands of those who have been the immediate agents of these enormities, and how much at the hands of those who have actively or passively encouraged them in this country, at the bar of that final tribunal where they are gone, and towards which we are all hastening, I presume not even to conjecture; but surely the dreadful fact should stimulate us to use every exertion we can to promote the immediate extinction of this heavy national crime.'

CHAPTER V.

THE EMANCIPATION ACT.

Difference of Opinion among the Abolitionists—Meeting at Freemasons' Hall—Separation of the Two Parties—Mr. James Cropper's and Mr. Sturge's generous Offer—Formation of the Agency Committee—Appeal to the Country by Lectures—Mr. George Thompson—Mr. Sturge's Part in this Agitation—Rev. William Marsh—Mr. Buxton and Mr. Sturge—Letter of Mr. Buxton—The Movement suspended by the Reform Agitation—Then renewed with additional Vigour—Election of 1832—Boards of Correspondence and their Effect—The Reform Ministry indisposed to take up the Question—Letter to Mr. Sturge—Meeting of Delegates in London—Delegates wait in a Body on the Prime Minister—The Government Measure of Emancipation—Disappointment of the Abolitionists—The Apprenticeship Clause and the Compensation to Planters—The Abolitionists are divided as to the Government Measure—Letter from Mr. Buxton to Mr. Sturge—Mr. Sturge's Letter to Mr. Forster—Mr. Buxton's proposed Compromise—Disapproval of some of the Abolitionists.

WE have already intimated that there were now in the field two sections of the anti-slavery party, both of whom were thoroughly and equally devoted to the great object of securing the freedom of the slave. But grave differences of opinion existed between them, both as to the time within which that object might be practicable, and the means to be employed for its attainment. The younger and more democratic element demanded a policy more definite and peremptory than was generally approved by the leaders, and had far greater faith in a bold appeal to the country than in the parliamentary strategy and influence with men in office which had

hitherto been principally employed. At the Annual Meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1830, which was held at Freemasons' Hall, this difference found expression in a very significant manner. The large room was filled to overflowing. Noblemen and members of Parliament, and gentlemen of rank and distinction, crowded the platform. Mr. Wilberforce was in the chair. Brougham, and Denman, and Lushington, and O'Connell, and Buxton were among the speakers. The resolutions, however, were of the usual vague character, merely pledging the meeting 'to leave no proper and practicable means unattempted for effecting, *at the earliest period*, the abolition of slavery throughout the British dominions.' But as even the West India interest had no objection to talk of gradual abolition, this language was felt by the more ardent spirits of the party to mean very little. Towards the close of the meeting, therefore, Mr. Henry Pownall, now chairman of the Middlesex magistrates, stood up in the side gallery, and after deprecating in a few simple words all further hesitation and delay, moved as an amendment:—'That from and after January 1, 1830, every slave born within the king's dominions shall be free.' The effect was electrical. The proposal was received by the assembly with a perfect tempest of applause, which grew only louder and stormier at every attempt made by the prudent occupants of the platform to control it, and to restore the tone of respectable and well-bred decorum from which they had a mortal fear of departing. They had, however, ultimately to accept Mr. Pownall's amendment, with such lowering modifications as the temper of the meeting would permit them to introduce. But the breach between the two parties, of which the incident we have mentioned was only

symptomatic, was too deep to be healed by any temporary compromise. Finally, the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other.

Sir George Stephen, in his 'Anti-Slavery Recollections,' gives a graphic description of the actual circumstances of the separation. An unavailing attempt had been made at one of the committees of the old Anti-Slavery Society to induce that body to assume a more aggressive attitude, by a bold appeal to the country through means of public meetings. A scheme for that purpose had been submitted to them, and rejected as 'well-meaning but impracticable.' Sir George, who was on that occasion the mouthpiece of the party of progress, was about to retire discomfited and indignant, when he was followed by Mr. James Cropper, who said to him, 'Friend Stephen, thou must dine with me at my hotel to-morrow, and bring thy papers with thee. I have some friends who wish to hear thy explanations.'

The dinner accordingly took place, and when it was over, the projector of the scheme for popular agitation rejected by the committee, was asked to explain somewhat more fully the details of his scheme. Some objections were started. 'But,' says the narrator, 'Mr. Cropper soon put an end to them with a very practical question: "Friend S——, what money dost thou want?" "I want 2,000*l.*, but I will begin if I can get 1,000*l.*" "Then I will give thee 500*l.*," said the noble fellow, and another, not a whit less nobly generous, Joseph Sturge, immediately followed with a promise of 250*l.*'

This led to the formation, in the year 1831, of 'The Agency Committee,' which, though living on terms of perfect civility with the 'Anti-Slavery Society,' and numbering, nominally, some of the members of the

latter among its executive, followed a course entirely independent. It addressed itself to the one specific business of informing the public mind on the abominations of slavery, and thereby evoking a popular opinion which should act as 'a pressure from without' upon the Government, and even, if necessary, as was sometimes the case, upon their own parliamentary leaders. It seems strange to us, now that everybody in this country is, professedly at least, opposed to slavery, to be told that, at the period to which we refer, nearly the whole power of the public press was bitterly hostile to the cause of abolition. In the first report of the Agency Committee, they say that 'scarcely a newspaper or a magazine could be found which, on this topic, was just enough to be neutral, and by far the greater number combined to oppose the abolitionists, whatever might be the distinction of their party, or the tenor of their politics.' But the pulpit and the platform were still open to them, and these they determined to occupy by every means in their power. Some of the clergy, and many dissenting ministers, heartily responded to the call made upon them to preach or lecture upon the subject. But the principal reliance of the Agency Committee was upon a regularly organised system of lecturing by agents wholly devoted to the work, followed by the establishment of auxiliary associations all over the country. They were singularly happy in their selection of lecturers. Among them were Mr. Scoble, Mr. Baldwin, Capt. Stuart, and other able and earnest men. Mr. George Thompson especially, with a matchless power of popular eloquence, stirred most deeply the heart of the multitude by his graphic delineations of slavery, and his passionate appeals to the national conscience. In all this agitation Joseph Sturge, though

less prominently before the public than he afterwards became, was one of the most active and constant helpers. So much so, indeed, that Birmingham, next to London, was for many years the most important centre of activity for all anti-slavery operations. Throughout the whole of the midland counties his labours were indefatigable, organising societies, getting up public meetings, corresponding with the friends of the cause, and moving into action all within the circle of his influence by the energy of his character and the contagion of his benevolent enthusiasm. He was happy, also, in being surrounded by a number of men, of various religious denominations, who thoroughly sympathised with his views, and threw themselves into the work with corresponding ardour. Among these may be mentioned, especially, the names of Admiral Moorsom, Revs. T. Morgan, T. Swan, and J. Riland. The Rev. William Marsh, then incumbent of St. Thomas's, Birmingham, now of Beckenham, was, also, a most devoted fellow-labourer with him in this good work. One or two brief extracts from the letters which this excellent man wrote to Mr. Sturge about the time referred to, will furnish a pleasant illustration of the perfect cordiality which existed between them. The following, though without a date, was probably written some time in the year 1831.

‘DEAR STURGE,—How I wish the most powerful and plain arguments on the whole subject of slavery could be condensed, so that man, woman, and child should understand and oppose the iniquity. My reason for not before offering further services arose from the idea that, if an eye-witness pleader could be found, the effect would be sevenfold: but when there is nothing better to be had, employ me where you please. If I cannot go, I will say so. Therefore, hesitate not to say, “Go to A, B, C, D, &c., and plead our cause.”

‘Yours affectionately,

‘W. MARSH.’

Nov. 4, 1832.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—I always consider it as my duty to go where I appear to be wanted, when paramount duty of another kind does not interpose to prevent. The Oxford meeting might probably be on a Wednesday evening. In this case, I would take my Tuesday lecture here, and return by Friday, and so only miss my juvenile Thursday morning lecture; but if another day be necessary, I would ask some one of my own brethren to take my duty, provided I am not absent on the Sabbath. . . . Let me know the place and the time as soon as you can conveniently; and if you can, for humanity’s sake, enlist some other friend. You know how I am pressed for time and strength; but the cause shall not be left destitute of a pleader.

‘Yours most truly,

‘W. MARSH.’

By such means as these, pursued all over the kingdom, the Anti-slavery question was gradually lifted into a position so imposing as to command the attention of the legislature and the government. There was still, however, considerable difference of opinion between the leaders of the agitation out of doors and the champions of the cause in Parliament as to the best method of procedure. It was such a difference, indeed, as was to some extent inevitable, and such as has always marked, and probably always will mark, every movement like this, which, while deriving its impulse from public opinion, must find its practical accomplishment in parliament. Mr. Buxton and his associates saw more clearly than it was possible for those outside to do the formidable difficulties which met them in front, while Mr. Sturge and *his* associates, from their constant contact with the popular feeling out of doors, were more conscious of and more confident in the immense force

of public opinion by which the demand for immediate emancipation was now backed up. When, therefore, in the year 1831, Mr. Buxton signified his intention of moving, that from a given period no children should be born into slavery, Mr. Sturge seems to have remonstrated, and urged upon him a bolder course. This elicited from the former the following letter, which is introduced here to show how fully both parties recognised each other's perfect loyalty to the great cause for which they were struggling in common.

From Mr. Buxton to Mr. Sturge.

'DEAR SIR,—My good friend Mr. Macaulay has this evening forwarded to me your letter, to which I must return a few lines in answer.

'I am really obliged by your letter. It is at all times welcome to me to receive advice and encouragement from those on whom I can place reliance, and who are *true* to our cause.

'The speedy and entire abolition of all slavery is my sole object. I have no opinion *whatever* of any measure that falls short of this, and for none such shall I seek. But in the means to be used for this end we may possibly differ. My wish is to strike a blow at the *root*; to ensure, in the first place, that no *new* victims shall enter this dreadful state; to declare, in short, that from a given period all children shall be born *free*. This, therefore, will be my proposition on the 1st of March; and unspeakable cause for thankfulness and congratulation shall we have should it be carried! In this my course is decided. I have adopted it after the deepest and most conscientious deliberation. Far, however, am I from forgetting the thousands already in bondage, every one of whom has as good a right to his own limbs and liberty as you or I. But I wish first to prevent any more waters flowing into the lake, before I begin to empty it. I mean, however, not only to disavow all *consent* to the slavery of those already

born, but to commit myself to propose measures for their speedy, though gradual, emancipation.

‘I totally deprecate any schism among our friends. At the same time, I *must* pursue the course pointed out to me alike by my judgment and my conscience as *the best for the negroes*, which is the sole object I have in view. I trust our friends will not impede our movements; at the same time I cannot but say how much I prefer their going *beyond* me (in *speed* and *abruptness*, for it can be in nothing else) than their falling short of me; and I must candidly own that I should heartily rejoice if every man in England censured me for undue moderation and caution in this matter. I trust we may be favoured, in our battle of March 1st, above all with the blessing of Him *whose* is the cause of the oppressed!

‘And I am, dear Sir,

‘With much respect,

‘Yours very sincerely,

‘T. F. BUXTON.

‘Northrepps Hall, Cromer: January 27, 1831.’

During the latter part of 1831 and the beginning of 1832, the Anti-slavery agitation, like every other sectional agitation, was partially suspended amid the all-absorbing interest of the political struggle which preceded the passing of the Reform Bill. In a paper of ‘Memoranda on the Anti-slavery question,’ drawn up at that time by Mr. Cropper and Mr. Sturge, we find the following among other suggestions:—‘We think it best that nothing should be brought forward which is in any way likely to injure the Reform cause.’ But when that great measure had been secured, the advocates of the slave resumed their efforts with all the fresh impulse which they derived from the consciousness that they had now the means of bringing popular opinion to bear far more effectually upon the legislature, than under the old parliamentary system which had been just

swept away. William Knibb, the Baptist missionary, driven from Jamaica by the persecution of the planters, was sailing up the English Channel in June 1832. When the pilot came on board, his first question was, 'Well, pilot, what news?' 'The Reform Bill has passed.' 'Thank God,' he rejoined; 'now I'll have slavery down.' Such, no doubt, was the feeling generally entertained by the friends of the cause. But they did not trust to any such vague general hope. On the contrary, they redoubled their exertions. The election that took place at the end of 1832 afforded them an admirable opportunity to bring the public sentiment, which during the last few years they had done so much to create, to bear upon the candidates, who were seeking the suffrages of the new constituency, for a seat in the first reformed parliament. Boards of Correspondence were formed in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, whose object was to urge upon the friends of immediate abolition throughout the country to elicit from candidates 'a distinct reply to the following query, 'Whether, in the event of their becoming members of the ensuing parliament, they will strenuously promote and vote for the IMMEDIATE AND TOTAL ABOLITION OF BRITISH COLONIAL SLAVERY?' The effect of this method of procedure was very great. The process of enlightenment and conversion among the class of gentlemen who aspired to parliamentary honours went on with wonderful rapidity, and the result was for the first time an Anti-slavery House of Commons.

It was well these precautions had been taken. For the Reform ministry showed no alacrity to grapple with the question. In fact, they did everything in their power to evade it. There was no allusion to the subject in the speech from the throne, and when

Mr. Buxton, on discovering this omission, instantly gave notice of motion for the abolition of slavery, every effort was made to induce him to withdraw or postpone it, without any distinct pledge that the Government would take up the question. But Mr. Buxton was a man too sternly in earnest to be frightened or cajoled from his purpose. Nor did the state of public opinion out of doors render a retreat possible. The country was now thoroughly roused. A conviction of the essential wickedness of slavery as a crime before God, scorched the national conscience like fire, so as to make its further continuance intolerable. A memorable illustration of this was afforded at the time now referred to. When the rumour was circulated that the Government meant to throw the slavery question overboard, or at the best dispose of it by some measure of miserable compromise, a sentiment of deep indignation shook the public mind. The first intelligence was conveyed to Mr. Sturge by a friend then in London, in these words. The letter is dated March 28, 1833:—

‘I have bad news to convey to you, and the time allowed me requires me to be very short in my communication. Fowell Buxton had a meeting with Lord Goderich the day before yesterday, which convinced him that Government had given up all idea of emancipating the slaves. Whether he came to the knowledge of this painful fact by what Lord Goderich said or what he refused to say, I know not, but certain it is that he views the cause of emancipation as renounced by Government, and in consequence has called a meeting of all the emancipating party at Exeter Hall for eleven o'clock next Tuesday. It is now time to stir ourselves. . . . Sin will lie at our door if we do not agitate, agitate, agitate. We must all become Radicals and Unionists, for if we sit down quietly with our hands before us Government will laugh at us. The people must emancipate

the slaves, for the Government never will, and of this I think the most hoping and peaceful persons will now be convinced.'

Such being the state of the case, no time must be lost in bringing the opinion of the country to bear upon the ministry and parliament. The Agency Committee issued a summons to all the Anti-slavery societies throughout the kingdom, requesting them to send delegates to London without delay, who should wait in a body on the prime minister, and separately on their respective representatives. To ensure that this summons should not fall to the ground, a number of the leading friends of the cause, having divided the country into districts, determined to visit the most important towns in person. Mr. Sturge undertook Ireland and a part of Scotland, and as the time between the issue of the invitation and the assembling of the conference in London was very brief, and there were, in those days, no railways to facilitate rapid locomotion, the labour and fatigue he had to undergo on this journey were very great. He had to travel almost incessantly, day and night, to meet local committees, and call upon a large number of persons in the several localities he visited. But nothing could withstand his energy and zeal, and he succeeded in securing a good representation from those remote regions in the slave's parliament. His colleagues had been no less successful in other districts.

The result was that, on the 19th of April, 339 delegates from all parts of the country met at Exeter Hall, and having adopted an address, which had been prepared by the skilful pen of Mr. Joseph John Gurney, they went in a body to present it to the minister, attracting no little attention as they streamed in black-

coated procession through the Strand and Whitehall to Downing Street. The address was read by Mr. Samuel Gurney, and the essence of it was contained in this paragraph :—‘ We feel bound publicly and emphatically to declare, that while slavery obtains under any form, however modified or however sanctioned, we will never relax from our efforts, nor swerve from our purpose to exert that influence which we may collectively or individually possess, to effect by all legitimate means its immediate and entire abolition.’

The minister at the time said little that was satisfactory, but that this demonstration of public feeling produced a deep impression is obvious from the language afterwards used by Mr. Stanley in introducing his measure in the House of Commons, when he referred to the determination which existed throughout the country, ‘ a determination the more absolute and irresistible, because it is founded in that deep religious feeling, on that solemn conviction of principle, which admits of no palliative or compromise, and which has declared itself in a voice to which no minister can be deaf, and which no man who watches the signs of the times can misunderstand.’

Notwithstanding, however, this emphatic declaration, it was found that the Government plan of emancipation was, after all, very distinctly one of ‘ palliative and compromise.’ ‘ When Mr. Stanley,’ says Mr. Charles Buxton, in his father’s ‘ Life,’ ‘ turned from the general principles on which he proposed to act, to his scheme for their application, the feelings of the advocates of the negro underwent a painful change.’ There were two features especially in this scheme that were singularly obnoxious to the abolitionists. The first was the apprenticeship of twelve years (afterwards changed

into seven) to which the slave was consigned, and which was, in fact, nothing but the perpetuation of slavery under another name. The other was the compensation given to the slave-owner in the form of a loan of 15,000,000*l.*, afterwards transformed into a gift of 20,000,000*l.* We believe that all the friends of the slaves were dissatisfied with these provisions; but there arose a serious difference of opinion among them as to the practical course to be pursued.

Mr. Sturge and his friends counselled strenuous and uncompromising resistance. They believed that the apprenticeship was worse than a delusion, either as a substitute for freedom or as a preparation for it. They clearly foresaw that to retain the negro in a state of absolute subjection to the masters for a series of years, at the end of which he was to escape from their power, was a sure way to stimulate both their cupidity and cruelty. They would naturally argue that since the law was going to snatch their victim from their grasp at a given period, they would get out of him the most that they possibly could, whether of service or of submission, while their opportunity yet lasted. As to the compensation, the objection of the abolitionists was not monetary, but moral. They would not have grudged a hundred millions for the redemption of the slave, had they thought the principle a just one; but to pay the slave-owner for relinquishing his property in human beings, seemed to them an acknowledgment of the right to make merchandise of the souls and bodies of men. In their view it was the slave, rather than his owner, that was entitled to compensation.* On these and similar grounds they urged

* 'The Metropolitan Committee feel it expedient to call your attention pointedly to the distinction they have drawn between compensation and

determined opposition to the Government measure, under a strong conviction that the state of public opinion at the time would have compelled the ministry to have introduced another more thorough and satisfactory. Mr. Buxton and his friends, on the other hand, were for compounding with the Government, under the apprehension that if this measure were refused, no other could be obtained. It is not necessary now to argue which of the two parties was right. Mr. Buxton lived to see and to acknowledge, with the manly frankness which distinguished his character, that the apprenticeship, even in the reduced and modified form which, by his parliamentary influence, it was made ultimately to assume, was a flagrant mistake. What is very certain is, that both these admirable men and their respective followers were actuated by the purest motives in the causes they severally took. For the time, however, the divergence of opinion which prevailed led to considerable soreness of feeling. It fell to Mr. Sturge's lot to be the medium of conveying to Mr. Buxton a series of resolutions from some body of the more advanced abolitionists, in disapproval of what they deemed a departure on his part from the principle affirmed in the address of the delegates in April. How much it must have cost him to do this,

relief. They wholly and absolutely disclaim the principle of compensation; they deny that it is due; they protest against its payment; they consider compensation to be directly opposed to the very principles upon which the title to emancipation is founded.'—*Circular of the London Anti-Slavery Committee*, April 4, 1833.

'If the debt of immutable justice be paid in full to the injured slave, a humane and considerate people will readily concur in all such reasonable measures for the relief of the planter, or of individual cases of distress; as may meet with the approbation of the British Parliament.'—*Memorial to Earl Grey*, signed by the three hundred and thirty-nine delegates, April 10, 1833.

those will readily understand who knew his extreme tenderness of regard for the feelings of others. This communication, as was natural enough, drew a rather tart reply from Mr. Buxton, in which, however, he said, 'Pray understand that I address myself *not to you*, whose moderation I well know, and that, in this instance, you have endeavoured to soften the feelings of those you are acting with. If I have written with any irritation, I hope you will excuse me. I feel none towards anyone.' This slight cloud, however, soon passed away, for, a very few days after the letter from which we have just cited, we find the following from Mr. Buxton to Mr. Sturge:—

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—Pray don't think you did wrong in sending me the resolutions. I was much obliged to you for them, and if I appeared to write with any feeling of vexation I am sorry for it. We are doing thoroughly well, I believe. I hear reports about the bill which rejoice me extremely. Will you come and dine with me to-morrow at six o'clock? It would give us all pleasure to see you.

'Yours very truly,

'T. F. BUXTON.

'Devonshire: Monday, July 1, 1833.'

How deeply Mr. Sturge's own feelings were tried at this time is obvious from the following letter, which he wrote to his friend Mr. William Forster, on whose sound judgment and high religious character he was wont to lean with almost implicit trust.

18, Aldermanbury: 7th month, 4th, 1833.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I was much disappointed to find thou hadst left town, as amidst the discord of our Anti-slavery camp thou appear'st almost the only one who had the full confidence of all. For my own part, I have suffered so much and been

so much discouraged, from feeling compelled to dissent from the opinions of some to whose judgment, except in a matter of principle, I should gladly defer, that if there should be a committee appointed to watch the bill when it is in committee of the House (as I think there ought to be), I shall be almost tempted to go home, and not act upon it, unless thou wilt return to town. I, therefore, hope that thou wilt hold thyself in readiness to do so; if on the bill's coming out, which we now expect in a day or two, it should be thought desirable. My sole object in troubling thee with this, is to urge it upon thee. I think it would be particularly pleasant to Buxton, with whom I dined the day before yesterday, and had some conversation in reference to the formation of a committee, properly representing the Anti-slavery feeling, to watch the bill. Thy presence, also, would be very valuable on the subject of Christian instruction in the West Indies. We meet about that to-morrow.

‘Very affectionately thy friend,

‘JOS. STURGE.’

It is hardly necessary to say, however, that notwithstanding this momentary fit of despondency, he did *not* quit his post.

It will be seen that the above letter of Mr. Buxton, in which he speaks of their ‘doing thoroughly well,’ was written between the delivery of the speech in which Mr. Stanley expounded the Government measure, and the introduction of the bill in which the provisions of that measure were formally embodied. But the bill itself grievously disappointed Mr. Buxton, as, in spite of his remonstrances, it retained all that was objectionable in the original plan. Still, for the reasons already assigned, he did not deem himself at liberty absolutely to refuse it.

His object was to effect a compromise as between the two points that were specially distasteful to the aboli-

tionists, to surrender the twenty millions to the planter on condition of being rid of the apprenticeship. 'I hope,' he said in a letter to Mr. Pringle, 'my friends distinctly understand that my point is to overthrow the apprenticeship at the price of the twenty millions.' He accordingly voted for the compensation grant to the planters, but unhappily his efforts to use this concession as the means to abolish the apprenticeship failed. Two amendments which he moved in Committee, one for limiting the period of transition from slavery to freedom to one year, and another withholding one-half the compensation grant till the apprenticeship should have terminated, were rejected. So that the planters had got their money, but the slaves had not got their freedom, nor had the country any means now of enforcing on the planter an honest administration of the Emancipation Act. All that Mr. Buxton gained by his compromise was to reduce the apprenticeship from twelve to seven years. It cannot be denied that Mr. Sturge and a large proportion of the most earnest and active members of the Anti-slavery party, felt that a grave mistake had been committed by their parliamentary leaders. While giving them the amplest credit for the purity of their motives and the sincerity of their zeal for the enslaved, there was a strong conviction that with more firmness, and backed by such a public opinion as then existed in the country, a better bargain might have been made for the negro. But as Mr. Buxton and his friends in the House had determined to take the course they did, at the last moment, the dissidents out of doors could do nothing but protest, which they did in terms sufficiently indignant. It is not necessary to reproduce those terms here. All the strong feelings excited in that hour of conflict have long since

subsided in the breasts of the survivors, while the two good and great men who were the representatives of the two parties, always amid all their differences recognising and venerating each other's worth, have now met in 'the all-reconciling world.'

CHAPTER VI.

FURTHER ANTI-SLAVERY LABOURS. WORKING OF THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM.

Mr. Sturge's Marriage—Early Death of his Wife—Its Effect upon him—His sister Sophia returns to him—Letter to her—Slavery in the United States—Complicity of the Christian Church in the System—Speech of Mr. Sturge on that Subject—Addresses the Wesleyan Conference at Birmingham—Controversy with Rev. Dr. Fisk—Effect of Emancipation in the West Indies—Good Behaviour of the Negroes—Oppressive Working of the Apprenticeship System—Dangerous Provisions of the Act—Measures passed by the Colonial Legislatures—The Negro still virtually a Slave—Unsuccessful Efforts of the Abolitionists to get the Apprenticeship repealed—Mr. Sturge appeals to the Country—Great Meeting at Birmingham—His Speech there—Difficulty of procuring Evidence from the West Indies—His Apprehension that the Colonial Legislatures would defeat the Object of the Abolition Act—Determines to visit the West Indies—Address to him from his Fellow-citizens at Birmingham—Letter from Rev. J. A. James on his Departure—His own Feelings in anticipation of his Journey—Mr. Thomas Harvey is associated with him in his Mission.

AFTER the passing of the Emancipation Act, Mr. Sturge's attention was diverted for a while from public matters to his own domestic joys and sorrows. In April 1834, he married Eliza, the only daughter of James Cropper of Liverpool, the eminent philanthropist, with whom he had been so early associated in the Anti-slavery cause. It was a union that promised great and lasting happiness. Miss Cropper was a most estimable lady, of congenial sentiments and sympathies with himself, and eminently qualified to be a help-meet for him, not only

in his private relations, but in his public labours. But it pleased Providence that the bright prospect thus opening before him should be suddenly clouded. In less than a twelvemonth, he lost both wife and child. We need not wonder that for a moment he was stunned by the severity of this blow. But after a while he learnt the difficult lesson of entire resignation to the Divine will, and instead of bending in selfish sorrow over the grave of his buried hopes, he turned with a saddened heart, no doubt, but with a stronger purpose, to those services in the cause of truth and humanity to which he deemed himself now more than ever called. The state of his feelings is touchingly indicated in the following memorandum, which we find among his papers:—

‘1835. 12/31. *Near Midnight*.—How eventful have been the occurrences of the past year to me! How has death destroyed my pleasant pictures! O Lord, grant that it may be sanctified to me! that if before the close of another year it may please Thee to call me home, I may, through the boundless mercy of a crucified Redeemer, find forgiveness for my sins, though they are, indeed, as the sand of the sea for multitude; and if Thou should'st see meet to continue me a sojourner upon earth, and take away more of my pleasant gourds, grant, I beseech Thee, a continuance of that resignation to Thy divine will which I have thankfully to acknowledge Thou hast in the past year so mercifully extended in my times of greatest need. Enable me faithfully and diligently to fulfil Thy divine requirements in any path Thou may'st point out to me. The principal duties, it appears to me, in which I may be called to labour in the ensuing year are:

‘The cause of the poor African both in our own colonies and in other parts of the globe.

‘The question of birthright membership in our Society.

‘The prevention of first-day travelling on the London and Birmingham Railway; and

‘The promotion of the recognition of the free Gospel ministry.

‘But grant, O Lord, that I may not take one step in regard to any of these questions but as an humble instrument in Thine hand, and in entire accordance with Thy will.’

The effects produced upon his character by this mournful visitation were deep and enduring. But he was singularly favoured in having a comforter and counsellor still left in his own home, on whom his stricken heart could lean with entire trust. His sister Sophia, who had lived with him for many years before his marriage, hastened back again to his side when his brief period of matrimonial happiness was so abruptly brought to a close. With true womanly sympathy she soothed his griefs, while, with that high sense of the responsibilities of life which nothing but earnest Christian conviction produces, she gently weaned him away from what he calls ‘the selfishness of sorrow,’ by encouraging him to renew his interest in those public duties for which she believed him to be, beyond most men, at once called and qualified. The following letter was written to her during a temporary absence in London, in 1836, apparently on some business connected with the London and North-Western Railway. It is dated on the first anniversary of his wife’s death, and presents a very beautiful picture of the perfect communion of soul and heart which existed between the brother and sister.

‘MY DEAREST SISTER,—The attendance of my brother directors at the Lord Mayor’s dinner has left me an evening alone, which, under other circumstances, I might have found a difficulty in securing, and which I was very desirous of, as being the anniversary of the death of my dear Eliza. I cannot spend a part of it more agreeably, and I think more profitably, than in writing a few lines to thee, my dear sister.

Have I reaped any, and what, benefit from the strokes of affliction with which I have been visited, and which, while the wounds were fresh and sore, I think I have seen clearly were needed? I fear that if I honestly examine my own heart, I must acknowledge that its inward corruptions and attachment to the things of time (while convinced of their utter vanity) remain unsubdued; that it is still as cold and insensible as ever to the influence of Divine love, and as incapable of adequately comprehending and appreciating the boundless nature and extent of the redeeming mercy of God through Jesus Christ. I do, indeed, my dear sister, often feel much discouraged on this account; and in comparing the present with the past, the only point, or nearly so, in which I can trace anything like an alteration for the better, or ground for encouragement, is, that since my heavy bereavement this day twelvemonths, I think I have ceased to expect or desire a place of rest on this side of eternity. Until then I could hardly have said so, except very occasionally; but how far this my state of mind from what constitutes a true disciple of Christ, I deeply feel and mourn. Am I not, however, my dear Sophia, in thus dwelling on the gloomy side of the picture, casting discouragement upon thee, whom I should esteem it one of my highest privileges to strengthen and encourage? I do, I trust, often feel not insensible to the mercy of the Giver of every good and perfect gift that He has been pleased yet to spare thee to me; and that, while thou art encouraging my feeble desire after that which is good, and warning me when my feet are about to slip, I have the clear and cheering evidence that thou art steadily advancing on thy own path towards "that city whose builder and maker is God." Under all the circumstances which have occurred during the last twelve months, it is a cause of thankfulness that the selfishness of sorrow for what has been taken away has not been permitted to destroy an interest in and sympathy for the sufferings of others; and though I know I am cold, indeed, to what I ought to be in this respect, I *hope* I am not increasingly so. But how difficult it is to keep the mind in that state in which, while thankful for the blessings vouchsafed, and for any

opportunity of being instruments of usefulness to others, we do not suffer any of these things to retard the 'working out of our own salvation with fear and trembling.'

When at times rather tempted to think one so insignificant as myself—such an atom in the boundless extent of creation—must be beneath the notice of Omnipotence, I have allowed myself to indulge the supposition (and I hope it is not inconsistent with the conviction that Christ Jesus is the source of all spiritual blessings, through whatever channels He may please to convey them) that, as ministering spirits are appointed to watch over every heir of salvation, those who loved us on earth, who are 'not lost, but gone before,' may have this office delegated to them till we are permitted to follow; and the possibility that this might be the case as regards my Eliza and our beloved Priscilla, has, I believe, had at least not a weakening effect on my mind. Perhaps, however, it is not safe to indulge much in such views.

Thine most affectionately,

JOSEPH STURGE.

We return now to the record of the further Anti-slavery labours on which Mr. Sturge soon became engaged. His attention had long been directed with painful interest to the state of feeling which prevailed in the United States of America on the subject of slavery. The enormous development of the cotton trade had applied such a stimulant to the national cupidity, as almost for a time utterly to smother the voice of conscience. Instead of that strong abhorrence with which the founders of the republic had regarded this sinister institution, a class of public men had arisen, who, not content even with the language of apology, had begun to assert the positive virtues of slavery, and that in a tone of coarse and insolent effrontery, which sought to overbear all opposition, and to drown the remonstrances alike of reason and of religion. And,

unhappily, among the foremost in this audacity of evil were the churches of America and their ministers. At a meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society, held at Birmingham in July 1836, Mr. Sturge spoke out with great earnestness on this question. A brief extract from his speech may not be unacceptable as a specimen of his style of speaking. Usually distinguished only by its simplicity and calm common sense, there were occasions when his intense moral indignation made him eloquent. His object is to show that the discussion of the subject of slavery was not out of place at a missionary meeting, since hardly any evil more obstructs the labours of those who are seeking to evangelise the world.

After dwelling at some length upon the demoralising influence of this system in America, he thus proceeds :—

‘If we turn our eyes for a moment to poor unhappy Africa, we shall find that almost the whole of that continent may justly be said to be hermetically sealed against missionary efforts by this system, which, while it tears from its shores annually upwards of 100,000 victims, either to die amid all the horrors of the middle passage, or in hopeless unmitigated toil and bondage, is supposed to destroy two or three times that number in the internal wars fomented to the very heart of the Continent, and the march of the slaves to the coast, to supply the white man’s slave ships from the Christian country. What opinion, I would ask (were we Africans), should we form of such Christians as these? Can we wonder that, instead of receiving them as the messengers of peace and glad tidings, they should consider them as cannibals, and not unfrequently commit self-destruction, under the supposition that they shall be devoured when they arrive at the port of their destination? It has indeed been justly said of this horrid system, that it has brought into unnatural combination the evils of two distinct orders of society, caused vices to coalesce which have

no natural affinity, and that in consequence of it, all that has been borne to Africa of the boasted improvements of civilised life has been a masterly skill in the contrivance, and an unhesitating daring in the commission, of crimes which the mind of the savage was too simple to devise, and his heart too gentle to execute. I think it will be unnecessary to say more to show how intimately connected with the extension of these and similar institutions, is the uprooting of slavery and its concomitant evils; and I ought to apologise for having occupied so much time, but before I sit down I wish to express what I believe to be the duty of Christians, whom God in His mercy may have placed under circumstances to see it in its proper light, towards their brethren not so favoured. Far be it from me to say that had I been surrounded by the same moral pestilence, and exposed to the same temptations, I should have been less guilty; and I know there are those who may think it a breach of charity to reprove Christian professors, much less Christian ministers, in anything but gentle and soothing language; but I believe there are circumstances in which while it is the most painful office of friendship, it is also the greatest proof of Christian love to such as these, to speak strongly and unequivocally, even if you know the first effect will be to give offence; for Christian professors are sometimes the most difficult to arouse to a sense of their own guilt. To whom was it that the God of love used the severest language when personally upon the earth? Not to the poor outcast of society, whatever his crimes might have been, but to the self-righteous highly-professing scribes and Pharisees; and such is the enormous guilt of the professing Christian Church in America, with regard to slavery, that if we were gifted with language powerful as an archangel, and strong and alarming as the most tempestuous billows of the Atlantic to the shipwrecked mariner, we ought to raise it to its highest emphasis on this occasion, under the persuasion that through the blessing of Heaven we should thus be most likely to encourage the faithful band of abolitionists, and carry dismay and ultimate conviction to their opponents—hasten the day of universal freedom, and

the period when Christians of all nations shall show by deeds, not words, that they consider every country as their country, and every man as their brother.'

Soon after this the Annual Conference of the Wesleyan Methodists was held at Birmingham. It had come to Mr. Sturge's knowledge, by communications received from a friend on the other side of the Atlantic, that the American Methodists were to be represented on that occasion by a minister—Rev. Dr. Fisk—who was a delegate from one of the most pro-slavery ecclesiastical bodies in the United States. He determined, therefore, to apprise the members of the Conference of the sort of fellowship into which they were about to be betrayed. He prepared an address in his own name, and sent a copy to every member of Conference, giving extracts from his friend's letter, describing the proceedings at the last General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Cincinnati, of which Dr. Fisk was the representative. It seems that two of the ministers belonging to that body had attended and spoken at an Anti-slavery meeting, and this was an inextinguishable offence in the eyes of their brethren.

'Suffice it to say (continues the writer) that the Conference adopted a resolution by a vote of 140 to 14, reproving the two members who had attended the Anti-slavery meeting, and condemning modern Abolitionism. Some called the conduct of the two brethren under censure, "an utter contempt for, and outrage upon the general Conference." Abolitionism was called an "unhallowed flame." W. A. Smith, not only wished to God that Brother Scott (one of the culprits) was in heaven, but that the two members who were "guilty of the *damning iniquity*" of pleading for the slave, might be sharply rebuked before all the people. His wish was complied with.'

Dr. Fisk was one of the majority of 140 in the above proceedings.

‘I would earnestly call upon you (said Mr. Sturge at the close of his appeal), as you regard your character with the Christian public, but far more by your obligations as Christians, to consider whether it is not your solemn duty to express your unequivocal censure of the above proceedings, and to strengthen the hands of your noble but persecuted brethren in that land who are immediate abolitionists.’

Dr. Fisk wrote a very angry reply, declaring that he was utterly opposed to slavery, denying that there was any such party as a pro-slavery party existing in the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, and charging Mr. Sturge with ‘bearing false witness against his neighbours.’ To this Mr. Sturge responded by publishing extracts from an address signed by five Wesleyan ministers in America, declaring that ‘there were hundreds of the ministers and thousands of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who held the bodies and souls of men, women, and children—many of whom are members of the same church with themselves—in abject slavery, and still retain their standing without any censure on this account.’ To which he added an extract from a reply to the above, in which the writers, without attempting to deny the facts alleged, enter upon an elaborate apology for the slave-holding churches. This reply was signed by several Methodist ministers, at the head of whom was the name of the Rev. Dr. Fisk himself. We know not what reception this gentleman met with at the Conference, but it is very certain that this decided proceeding on the part of Mr. Sturge had a lasting effect in making the pro-slavery ministers of America very wary of seeking intercourse with the Christian churches of this country.

Meanwhile the friends of the slave were watching with great anxiety the effect that might be produced in

the colonies by the Act of Emancipation. The West Indians had indulged in the most ominous forebodings, predicting that the advent of freedom would be the signal for rioting and bloodshed and universal idleness. Their prognostications were utterly belied by the events. The conduct of the slaves was admirable. On August 1, 1834, the day on which the act came into operation, instead of breaking out into drunkenness and revel, they had crowded into the churches and chapels, and had awaited the great hour of their deliverance 'hushed in silent prayer.' Nor did the good tidings that reached their friends stop there. Month after month brought additional intelligence of the steadiness and industry with which they betook themselves to labour, as well as of their general good behaviour. 'It is impossible,' said Lord Stanley, 'that matters can be better than in the focus of danger—Jamaica, except it be in Antigua.' To the same effect was the testimony of the Marquis of Sligo, then Governor of Jamaica, in a despatch to the Colonial Office :—

'Many of the attorneys and managers have been so very loud in their assertions of the failure of the system, that they are now unwilling to admit the errors of their opinion. The first prophecy was blood and destruction on the 1st of August; in this they were wrong. The second, that this scene would take place at Christmas; in this they were wrong. The third, that the apprentices would not work for wages; in this they were wrong, as I know of no instance in which the usual wages were offered and were refused. The fourth was that the crop would not be taken off; in this they were wrong, as it has in many cases been taken off much earlier than usual, and if protracted in others, it has been as much from the weather and the refusal to give wages in many instances, as from any other cause.'

But when the other side of the question came to be

looked into, the result was far less satisfactory. The Act of Emancipation recited that on the 1st of August, 1834, 'slavery shall cease and be unlawful in the British colonies, plantations, and possessions.' But, owing to the apprenticeship clause, this proved to be a mere delusion and mockery. The English nation had paid down their twenty millions for the negro's freedom, but the negro was not free. The use of the lash, indeed, as a stimulant to labour in the field was abolished, but 'in no other respect whatever was his condition improved—in many it was very much worse.'* Never, indeed, was there a greater fraud practised upon a generous people, than that practised on the British people by the so-called Emancipation Act; for not only did it retain slavery in all its worst features seven years after the day on which it professed to enact that it should 'cease and be unlawful,' but it actually contained provisions by which it might be perpetuated to a period far beyond the stipulated seven years. In the imperial act *itself*, and not in any subordinate one in the West Indies, there was formally established a power to punish a slave *in time* to an extent not exceeding seven years *after the expiration of the apprenticeship*; also to apprentice children under six years of age till they were one-and-twenty, if declared to be insufficiently provided for. This extraordinary authority was vested in the hands of *one* magistrate, often interested in acting upon its provisions.† And when to this came to be added the various acts passed by the Colonial Legislature under the pretence of carrying into effect the imperial law, but designed, in fact, to increase to the utmost the power of the master, it will be easy

* Lord Brougham's speech in the House of Lords, February 1838.

† Riland's *Letter to Lord Glenelg*, p. 11.

to understand what a mere sham the liberty of the slave came to be. An analysis of the Jamaica Act, for instance, was drawn up by a barrister, and exhibited the following result :—

‘The legal position of the negro in Jamaica is this:—he is nominally subject only to gratuitous labour for his master for forty-five hours in the week, and to certain disabilities for public offices, which were considered incompatible with his dependent condition. But in fact, he remains an *emancipated prisoner* on the plantation to which he is attached; substantially liable to the same punishments and labouring under the same incapacities as heretofore. He cannot quit the estate, even during his own hours, without fear of punishment. He cannot dance with his children or associate with his neighbours without punishment. He cannot complain to the magistrate or remonstrate with the master without risk of a flogging for “insolence,” or “unjustifiable” absence. The whip follows him at every step, imprisonment and hard labour wait him at every turn. His home is converted into a prison, and the plantation into a prison-yard; and, as if to prevent the possibility of his forgetting the custody in which his apprenticeship places him, penal gangs patrol the estate, and bilboes are constructed in every village.* Notwithstanding the reiterated provisions of the Colonial Acts, affecting to guarantee to him the undisturbed enjoyment of the time emphatically called his own, the machinery of those acts is

* Of the extent and severity of the punishments inflicted some idea may be formed from the following statement, by the Rev. James F. M. Phillippo, of what took place in Jamaica during that miserable episode in its history:—‘During the short period of two years, 60,000 apprentices received, in the aggregate, one quarter of a million of lashes, and 50,000 other punishments by the tread-wheel, the chain-gang, and other means of legal torture; so that, instead of a diminution, there was a frightful addition to the miseries of the negro population, inducing a degree of discontent and exasperation among them never manifested under the previous system; and which, but for the influence exerted by the Governor, the missionaries, and some of the special magistrates, would, in all probability, have broken out into open and general rebellion.’

so contrived that he may, if he has once absented himself without permission, be legally worked for forty-two hours, in uninterrupted succession, and then dismissed with a flogging if he ventures to complain.'

With such powers as these in their hands, and with the old habit of tyranny strong upon them, we need not wonder that rumours soon began to reach this country of the frightful severity with which the apprenticeship was being worked by the planters and their subordinates. Many of the stipendiary magistrates, paid by this country as the official guardians of the negro, had become the mere tools of the planter; while those of them, of whom there was a considerable number, who had the integrity and boldness to raise their voice against the systematic frustration of the intentions of the imperial parliament, were driven by incessant persecution to resign their commission in disgust.

The friends of the slave had taken measures early to call the attention of the Government to these facts. In the beginning of 1835, parliament not being then in session, a most elaborate memorial, containing a full statement of the case as well as a masterly analysis of the obnoxious Colonial Acts, was presented to Lord Glenelg, who was at that time Colonial Secretary, on behalf of the Anti-slavery and Abolition Societies of the United Kingdom. When parliament assembled, it was expected that some decided steps would be taken by the leaders of the party in the House of Commons. Mr. Sturge went up to London, and remained there a considerable time, working indefatigably to secure for them such support from without as would enable them to present a bold front to the Government when they came to demand, as he hoped they would, the im-

mediate abolition of the apprenticeship. In a letter to his sister he writes :—

London : 6th month, 18th, 1835.

‘MY DEAR SISTER,—I find myself so much better in health than I have been during my former visits to London that, great as would be the comfort of having thy company, I do not see it necessary for thee to make the sacrifice of coming up, particularly as I fear thy health might suffer, and Anti-slavery matters may take a turn which may enable me suitably to leave earlier than I expected. Buxton will, we believe, be able to bring forward his motion to-morrow night. But we quite anticipate he will be in a minority, though a respectable one. If this should be the case, it is proposed to have a public meeting at Exeter Hall on 4th day (and we have engaged the Hall conditionally for the purpose), and to appeal to the country to support Buxton in a motion forthwith to abolish the apprenticeship, nothing short of which he now seems determined to accept. We send down to-night to the delegates to hold themselves in readiness to come up at a short notice to go in a body, as we did before, to the Colonial Office. From what I hear of the number of letters sent up to members, I hope there is still more interest felt in the country on the subject than we at one time expected. Dr. Greville writes from Edinburgh this morning : “Immediately on the receipt of your despatch to my brother secretary, Mr. Ogilvy, we drew up a set of *strong decided* resolutions, which, being unanimously agreed to, were published in the ‘North British Advertiser,’ which has a large circulation, and communicated by myself to our two representatives. The speaker, of course, can do little or nothing; but Sir John Campbell writes me word that he will decidedly support our views.” Two letters from one of the missionaries of the Scottish Missionary Society have been sent to the missionary committee here, filled with statements and complaints of the mal-administration of the Emancipation Bill. Copies have been forwarded to the Colonial Office and to Mr. Buxton. If his motion be not agreed to, it will be absolutely necessary

for every friend of the negro to buckle on his harness once more. I wrote to Charles yesterday suggesting the propriety of a meeting on 2nd day of some of our Anti-slavery friends. I hope on 7th day night to be able to let you know the course things are likely to take. In the parcel there will be circulars for J. A. James, William Marsh, and Captain Moorson as delegates.'

The motion of Mr. Buxton, to which this letter refers, was for a select committee to enquire whether the conditions on which the twenty millions had been granted for the abolition of slavery had been complied with. The motion was brought forward on the 19th of June. But unhappily, on some vague general assurance being given by the Government that great vigilance had been exercised, and would continue to be exercised, on behalf of the newly emancipated people, he consented to withdraw it. That he acted on this, as on all occasions, from a conscientious conviction of right, no one will for a moment question. But certainly many of his friends, and of the friends of the slave, were bitterly disappointed and discouraged. Turning away, therefore, from parliament, in which they began to fear there was no help, they appealed once more to the country. On the 14th of October in the same year, a large meeting was held at the Town Hall, Birmingham—for as the Anti-slavery agitation now began to revolve more and more around Joseph Sturge as its master-spirit, Birmingham became naturally to a large extent the centre of operations. At this meeting a memorial to Lord Melbourne was adopted, in which the conduct of the planters in trying to the utmost of their power to defeat the provisions of the Emancipation Act, after pocketing the twenty millions paid by the nation for the redemption of the slaves, was characterised as

'a practical and deliberate fraud.' The memorialists, utterly repudiating all further dependence upon the intention or power of the colonists to establish a policy of justice and mercy with an ultimate view to the abolition of slavery, 'distinctly stated their conviction that nothing short of the entire emancipation of the slave from every restraint, except such as may be, and is, equally imposed upon the white population, will effectually destroy or even materially alleviate the oppressions of the colonial system.' On February 1, 1836, another large meeting was held at Birmingham on the same subject, at which Mr. Sturge made an able statement, sustained and illustrated by copious extracts from private letters and documents received from the West Indies, showing the fearful suffering to which the negroes were subjected under the apprenticeship system. In a report of the meeting, which was published in the form of a pamphlet for general circulation, we are told 'that the close of this address, and above all the touching manner of its delivery, produced a most powerful effect upon the meeting.' Mr. Angell James, who was the next speaker, began by saying that, 'after the horrifying details they had just heard read to them, and the truly tender eloquence with which those details had been followed and supported by that excellent friend of all that was good, Mr. Joseph Sturge, what remained for that meeting to do but to rise, and with one heart and voice to demand the immediate abolition of the last remains of negro slavery.' The impression produced by these and other speeches was still further deepened by an address of extraordinary power from Daniel O'Connell, whose fidelity to the cause of the slave never faltered for an instant during his long and stormy public career. Thus Birmingham, which, so far back as

the year 1830, was the first, under the instigation of Joseph Sturge, to give public utterance to the demand for 'immediate emancipation,' has the honour also of having been the first under the same guidance to declare open war against that system of cruelty and fraud which was attempted to be palmed upon the people of England as a substitute for emancipation.

But there was one very formidable obstacle in the way of the British abolitionists in their assaults upon the apprenticeship system. That was the extreme difficulty, owing to the social tyranny that prevailed in the Colonies, of procuring the evidence of producible witnesses. They were in this embarrassing condition that, while constant communications reached them describing in indignant terms the injustice and cruelty practised on the negro, they were accompanied with such injunctions of secresy as rendered them comparatively valueless for all practical purposes.

'It is necessary to warn our friends,' wrote an official resident in the West Indies, 'against giving publicity to any correspondence with persons here. You will be plied by many insidious persons from hence; who, under pretence of friendliness to the cause, will seek to know the sources of your information to destroy those who correspond with you. Let me request you, therefore, to be watchful, and never to show your letters. Copy out the information if you will; but let them know nothing of names and persons.'*

But it is obvious that such anonymous testimony would be of little avail against watchful, adroit, unscrupulous adversaries, such as the West Indians had ever proved themselves to be. It was under these circumstances that Joseph Sturge adopted the bold determination of paying a personal visit to the West

* *Riland's Letter*, p. 11.

Indies, to investigate the case for himself. He had been deeply moved unquestionably by the details which were continually reaching him of the miserable condition of the negroes under the new law. But what weighed with him probably even more than this was the fear that the planters and Colonial legislatures, taking advantage of those dangerous provisions in the Law of Emancipation already referred to, would employ the *interim* state of apprenticeship in forging a system of restraint and coercion that should absolutely defeat the purposes of the Abolition Act, and retain the whole, or at least the rising generation of negroes, in a servile and oppressed condition little differing from slavery, for an indefinite period. Through his intercourse with Dr. Philip, Mr. Sturge had already become acquainted with the insidious manner in which laws enacted under the influence of a dominant class might be brought to bear upon the destinies of a remote and friendless people. In the volume published by him and his colleague on their return from the West Indies, we find a significant reference to this South African precedent. Commenting upon a law affecting the negroes which had been passed by one of the Colonial legislatures, they say :—

‘It is impossible to be too jealous of laws like these. We cannot forget the condition a few years since of the Hottentots at the Cape; who, nominally free, were reduced by a single injurious ordinance to a state of villanage, which left them at the mercy of a ruthless task-master, without giving them any protection even in his self-interest—a state which exposed them to the exactions of slavery without its slender indulgences—to its worst horrors without any of its mitigations.’

Such were the motives which prompted Joseph Sturge to undertake his West India mission. It was

a much more formidable enterprise than it may now appear. He had never before crossed the seas except to Ireland ; ocean-steamers were then unknown. The voyage was of uncertain length and of considerable peril. The dangers of the climate were not small, according to common apprehension. But most of all were there reasonable grounds of fear from the intense enmity which the white population of the colonies were suppose to cherish toward all who presumed to meddle with their domestic institution. Only five or six years had elapsed since the missionaries in Jamaica had been first mobbed, then driven with gross outrage and violence from the islands, and their chapels burnt in open day. It was amid such scenes and such men that Mr. Sturge went calmly forth to carry forward an investigation, the results of which, it was well known, would jeopardise both the reputation and the fancied pecuniary interests of the planters. When his determination to cross the Atlantic on this mission of mercy became known, his fellow-citizens of Birmingham met and presented him with an address full of sympathy and encouragement, proving that for once, at least, the proverb did not hold good, that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. Though no man ever less courted publicity or applause, we cannot doubt that this spontaneous testimony of regard from those who daily saw his manner of life, and were best qualified to estimate his character, must have been gratifying to his feelings on the eve of such an enterprise. And no less so, we may be sure, was the following cordial and affectionate letter addressed to him on the same occasion by his eminent friend and fellow-townsmen, the Rev. John Angell James :—

Edgbaston, October 1.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—Although, in consequence of being on the eve of a journey, I am much pressed for time, I cannot forward to you the enclosed general recommendation, to be used as you may think proper in America, without expressing in writing, what I have already given utterance to in conversation, my best wishes for the success of your benevolent mission, your personal health and comfort, and your safe return to the circle of friends by whom you are held in the bonds of affectionate esteem. It has been in my heart to have solicited, as far as your own views of the subject would allow, that I might be permitted not only to pray for, but with you, before you left this neighbourhood. That opportunity, however, is now gone by, and all that remains is that I commend you to the guidance, protection, and grace of God in my own Christ.—This I shall not fail to do, nor to entreat for you a deep and comfortable sense of the presence of Him who is equally near to His people upon the sea and upon the dry land—in a foreign country and upon their native soil. May the God whose you are, and whom you serve, be your sun and your shield; may the angel of the covenant go with you; and the Lord Jesus be with your spirit. ‘Behold He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and even for ever more’ (Psalm cxxi). May these beautiful and comfortable words be all fulfilled to the letter in your experience. May you have no reason to doubt that you have been moved by an infallible Guide to undertake this mission; and may such be its results to the cause of suffering humanity as shall convince even the incredulity of affection, and exchange in the minds of some, whose love made them unwilling to surrender you, the joyful approval for the silent and tearful acquiescence. May God prepare your way before you, and command for you the hearts, both of the friends and foes of

your mission. May he give you access to sources of information which shall further your designs and assist you in the accomplishment of your object; and so direct your own mind and those to be associated with you, as that you may be preserved from everything that would defeat your purpose. In the midst of difficulties may He give you the spirit of wisdom, and in the face of opposition, and when surrounded by discouragement, the spirit of might. Be yours the peace that passeth understanding, and the rejoicing of a good conscience. Should your mission fail, may you be submissive and content; should it succeed, and you should return followed by the tears of negroes' joy, to be greeted by the plaudits of the negroes' friends in this country, may you be humble as well as thankful. Peace be in your mind, health in your body, love and harmony among the friends that accompany you. Again, I say, the Lord that executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed be with you, to assist, protect, prosper, and bless you. Amen.

'Such, my dear friend, are, and will be the prayers on your behalf of

'Your sincere and affectionate friends,

'J. A. JAMES,

'A. M. JAMES.'

Mr. Sturge was very little addicted to analyse and register his own feelings, and hence it is that we have but few and rare glimpses into his inner life. But there are two short scraps of paper remaining, one written in contemplation of his West India journey, and the other in the midst of it, which afford us a passing insight into the spirit of profound humility and dependence upon divine guidance by which he was actuated at the time. The first is under date of August 2, 1836:—

'My forty-third birthday. I have been reading this morning the closing scene of my precious Eliza's life, and, in looking

back on my own progress since that awful event, I am deeply discouraged in the persuasion that my advance towards that kingdom where she is for ever at rest has been all but imperceptible. The world, in some shape or other, is diverting my attention from the one thing needful; and though I know its utter vanity, and desire not to find a resting-place this side of eternity, yet so desperately wicked and deceitful is my heart that I am ready at times to despair that it ever can be washed in the blood of Christ. Lord, increase my faith in Thee and love towards Thee, and grant that my sole desire may be to serve Thee. In the important prospect which I have long had before me of a visit to the West Indies, grant that I may be guided by Thy counsel, and directed either to go or to stay, as it may be most likely to promote Thy glory and the welfare of Thy suffering creatures; but I feel unworthy to be employed even to hand the cup of cold water in the name of a disciple.'

The second is dated 'Barbados,' 1 of 1st month, 1837:—

'I have now been several weeks on this side of the Atlantic, and, in conjunction with my friend Thomas Harvey, have been endeavouring to collect information in reference to the condition of the poor negroes in the colonies. May God grant that it may issue in some benefit to them! but I have felt such a sense of weakness in myself, and such inability to approach my heavenly Father in prayer, that it seems very unreasonable to expect any good can be effected through such an unworthy instrument. If I should yet go mourning on my way, grant, O most merciful Saviour, just enough of the light of Thy countenance to prevent my casting away my confidence in Thee.'

On their return, he and his colleague published a volume of great value, entitled 'The West Indies in 1837,' the first edition of which was sold in a few months.

In selecting Mr. Thomas Harvey as his companion in this journey, Mr. Sturge was happy in having found one who entered with hearty sympathy into the objects of his mission, and was able to second his researches efficiently. Happily, we are able to present to our readers the records of that eventful journey, or as much of them as it is deemed necessary to introduce here, from the pen of this gentleman, who kindly consented, at the request of the biographer, to prepare the following narrative of the visit to the West Indies.

CHAPTER VII.

VISIT TO THE WEST INDIES.

Intercourse with West India Planters on board Ship—Mr. Sturge's Fidelity of Rebuke—He and his Friends reach Barbados—Proceed thence to Antigua—Mysterious Disappearance of a Packet of Letters—Spent a Month at Antigua, which had already passed an Act of Emancipation—Inquiry into its Effects—Testimony of Dr. Nugent, Speaker of the Assembly—Satisfactory Results of the Act—Return to Barbados—But touch first at Montserrat—State of that Island—Then at Dominica—And at Martinique—Baron de Mackau, the Governor—St. Lucia—Sir John Jeremie, the 'Père Président'—Reach Barbados—Description of the Island—Ungenerous Conduct of the Planters—Oppressive Operation of the Apprenticeship System—Fearful Prison Cruelties—Insidious Scheme for Apprenticing of young free Children—Travellers proceed to Jamaica—Investigations there among all Classes of Men—Visits various Missionary Stations—Affecting Interview with the Rector of St. Ann's Bay—Brown's Town and Rev. John Clark—Negro Manager of an Estate—Falmouth and Montego Bay—Rev. Messrs. Burchell and Knibb—Arcadia and Rev. John Vine—Lucia and Rev. Mr. Stainsby, &c.—Results of Investigation—Few resident Proprietors—Character of Overseers and Book-keepers—Stipendiary Magistrates—Number and Severity of Punishments—The Tread-mills—Drunken Magistrate—Capricious Tyranny of the Overseers—Summary of the Effects of the Apprenticeship System.

JOSEPH STURGE and his companions embarked at Falmouth, on board the 'Skylark' mail-packet, for Barbados, on November 17, 1836. The voyage was performed with favourable weather in twenty-seven days. All the other passengers were connected with the West Indies, several of them being influential planters of Trinidad, Barbados, and St. Vincent. The

objects of the anti-slavery party were well known on board, but the shyness that prevailed at first between them and their fellow-voyagers soon disappeared, and much agreeable intercourse ensued. It was gratifying to find that West India planters were by no means necessarily pro-slavery. As regards foreign countries, indeed, the prevailing opinion on board appeared to be soundly abolitionist! Our own colonies, it was confessed, were enjoying unwonted prosperity. The anticipated losses for which compensation had been paid were postponed at least to the era of complete emancipation, a period that most on board professed to regard with apprehension.

One of Joseph Sturge's associates relates a pleasing instance, slight but significant, of his fidelity to duty. He was seated on deck one day, when several of the other passengers were pacing its narrow limits for exercise. One of these, a fine old gentleman of the old school, had been in the army and present at the capture of Trinidad, and had subsequently settled as a planter in that island. From early habit he was addicted to the irreverent use of the sacred name. Joseph Sturge, who had appeared absorbed in thought, suddenly said to his friend. 'I must speak to that old man.' He rose and joined him in his walk. They took several turns together and separated. Marked respect and increased cordiality from the individual whom he had thus gently admonished were the result of this conference.

The 'Skylark' came to an anchor in Carlisle Bay, opposite Bridgetown, Barbados, late in the evening of December 12. The island was suffering from an epidemic fever, which, with other considerations, induced a change of plan. Instead of remaining together at Barbados for the purpose of their visit, Joseph Sturge

decided to proceed in the next mailboat, accompanied by Thomas Harvey, to Antigua and the Leeward Islands, while John Scoble and Dr. Lloyd intended a few days later to depart for the important colonies of British Guiana. Accordingly Joseph Sturge and his companion embarked in the afternoon of the 14th on board the 'Sword-fish' schooner, and on the 18th they landed at St. John's, Antigua.

One of the passengers on board the 'Sword-fish' was a colonist of Demerara, a man of polite and insinuating address, who was engaged in visiting the smaller colonies and buying up the indentures of such negro apprentices as he could induce to transfer themselves to him to be conveyed to Guiana. Here was the coolie traffic in embryo. This individual admitted that his operations were regarded with much jealousy both by white and black in the islands, yet he appeared to meet with some success among the non-predial apprentices of petty and impoverished proprietors. An odd misadventure befell our friends on board this little vessel, in the loss of a parcel containing the whole of their letters of introduction. Due search was made for it, and everybody on board interrogated, but without avail. This parcel, except a very few letters that were never recovered; was afterwards restored to them on their first landing in Jamaica. It had been doubtless examined and then very considerably mailed to Kingston, where, through the courtesy of the deputy post-master, it was restored to its proper owners without charge. No inconvenience was experienced by the travellers from the absence of the usual credentials.

Joseph Sturge and his companion spent nearly a month in Antigua. The legislature of this island had rejected the apprenticeship, and had preferred passing

at once a measure of complete emancipation, which took effect on August 1, 1834. Among the causes that, under the guidance of Divine Providence, contributed to this happy result, may be reckoned the energetic influence of the governor, Sir Evan M'Gregor, the humane impulses of many members of the assembly and council, and, lastly, a shrewd, arithmetical calculation that estates could be cultivated at less cost by free than by slave labour. It was of the highest interest to Joseph Sturge to ascertain how far this bold and generous policy had succeeded, and to compare its fruits with the results of the system of apprenticeship. The enquiry was pursued with zeal and diligence through every available channel. The visitors obtained interviews with the Lieut.-governor Colonel Light, the president of council, and the speaker of the assembly; they listened to the debates in the latter body, watched the trials in the Court of Assize, conversed with the chief justice on the statistics of crime, inspected the jails and attended the police courts. They visited the churches, chapels, mission-stations, and schools. They obtained access to estates in various parts of the island, and made careful comparative estimates of the cost of cultivation. They discussed the social and economical interests of the colony with intelligent persons of every grade in society, and with all the aid they could obtain on the spot they pursued the comparison between slavery and freedom. The general result can scarcely be better given than in the statements made by Dr. Nugent the Speaker of the House of Assembly, himself a scientific agriculturist, and one of the most enlightened men of his day. Fifteen years before he had abolished the use of the whip on the estates under his control, and with a wise foresight as well as praiseworthy humanity, when the crisis came,

in the debates of the island legislature, he threw his weighty influence into the scale on behalf of immediate freedom.

‘The comparative improvements,’ said Dr. Nugent, ‘in the condition of the rural propulation are not to be enumerated. They are not flogged or locked up. They are free to go or stay. They receive money wages, while they retain all their old privileges, except the allowances of food and clothing. The people are much more easily and pleasantly governed. The proprietor has less cark and care, less bodily and mental fatigue, and infinitely less annoyance of all descriptions. Every difficulty used to be referred to him, constant disputes were to be settled, as to the work to be done by females, &c. No one can conceive the annoyance engendered by the old system, in addition to which the obloquy thrown upon the planters was become almost insupportable. All this was swept away by emancipation. *He did not believe there was a man in the colony who could lay his hand upon his heart and say he would wish to return to the old state of things.*’

As regards the cost of cultivation and the interests of the proprietors,

‘The saving is great in those cases where the slaves were supported entirely on imported supplies, and less where they were fed on rations of ground provisions grown upon the estate. A purchasing and consuming population was beginning to be formed within the island itself. The sale of ground provisions, molasses, &c., to their labourers is already become a source of profit to estates. The reduction of medical expenses is considerable; the estate hospitals have become useless. On a Monday morning, during slavery, the doctor would find eight, ten, or even twenty in the sick-house; now he has comparatively nothing to do. He is paid one-third less per head than before, but his duties have diminished in a much greater ratio.

‘Before emancipation some estates were eaten up by their over-population. On one belonging to a relative of his, with

320 slaves, the saving effected by reducing the number of negroes had been immense. In such cases there had been generally some legal impediment to the transfer or sale of the superfluous hands. Several properties in this situation were on the point of being abandoned. Nothing could have saved them but a legislative measure of emancipation. On the whole, estates had increased in value, and the proprietary body was more prosperous than before. But there were important exceptions. A few estates had been disorganised, if not ruined, by the change; but in most instances, if not all, this can be traced to the harsh and injudicious conduct of the owners or their agents.

'The *economical* advantages of free labour were only beginning to be felt. Every estate maintained its full complement of labourers both in and out of crop. The island could never realise the full benefits of the new system till there were independent villages, which to the planter would be as reservoirs of surplus labour, enabling him to employ many or few hands, according to his actual wants. A diminished supply of human labour would stimulate improvement in the use of implements and animals.'

The statements of Dr. Nugent were confirmed by enquiries in many other directions, of which the details are copiously given in 'The West Indies in 1837.'

In this colony, then, the transition from slavery to freedom had been peacefully effected in a single day. No tumult or riot ensued, but the memorable change was ushered in by the attendance of divine worship, and by hymns of praise to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Labour went on as before, and no more peaceful or orderly community was anywhere to be found in the world than the population of Antigua. They were, it is true, in a transition state, and had for the present little choice but to continue to labour at the very low rate of one shilling currency (5½d. sterling),

which had been fixed by a general agreement or combination of the planters. The aged, worn-out, and diseased labourers were partially supported by the estates on which they had spent their youth and strength; but, on the whole, especially at this time of drought and dearth, much suffering and destitution prevailed among this class. The administration of the law, in cases of complaint (not very numerous in the aggregate) between employer and labourer, leaned oppressively against the weaker party. The moral and social evils of slavery had not suddenly disappeared; even its traditions of plantation management in the field and in the boiling-house still held sway; but a principle had been introduced which, silently, gradually, and peacefully, was restoring its rights to labour, introducing a just and equal regard to the claims of all classes, and removing the mental fetters which had oppressed the faculties and powers both of masters and slaves. Competition was already breaking through the combination to depress wages.

So far from emancipation having imperilled the interests of the colony, it was plain that this beneficent measure had shielded its proprietary from the ruin which threatened them, from the drought and other adverse visitations.

In the appendix to 'The West Indies in 1837,' under the head 'Antigua,' are discussed a variety of important topics connected with the welfare of this colony. Nothing was regarded with more jealous vigilance by Joseph Sturge, than the spirit of its legislation as affecting the labouring class. In a searching analysis of laws, then recently enacted, the tendency to treat the labourer as a serf of the soil is detected, and a protest is entered against the creation of new barriers between

the several classes of society. It is scarcely to be doubted that the timely utterance of a righteous testimony in this matter has borne good fruit. In their printed volume, the travellers are warm in their expressions of gratitude for the courtesy with which they were everywhere received in Antigua.

Having accomplished the object of their visit to Antigua, Joseph Sturge chartered a small schooner to carry his companion and himself back to Barbados, touching at several islands on their way. A single night's voyage landed the travellers at Montserrat. In this small and poverty-stricken colony, they found a number of superior and intelligent men, who readily supplied the information they were in search of. A measure to abolish the remainder of the apprenticeship had been before the legislature, and was lost by only a single vote. Hereupon, five proprietors had voluntarily emancipated their negroes. Their estates were efficiently cultivated, and the industry of the negro, when working for wages as a freeman, was universally admitted. Two or three years before his death, Joseph Sturge purchased a large abandoned sugar estate on this island, in order to test in the most practical manner his conviction, that by fair and just treatment of the native labourers, sugar could be profitably produced, without the aid of the servile labour of Indian coolies. He did not survive to witness the completion of his plans in reference to this property, but not long before his decease he expressed to the writer his regret that he had not taken the same step earlier, and his belief that he would thereby have advanced the objects he had at heart in the West Indies, more than by much labour and expenditure in other directions.

In their next voyage, the travellers in their little

schooner encountered a perilous storm. Their friends at Montserrat gave them up for lost; but, through the protecting care of a merciful Providence, after tossing about two days, with some damage to the ship, they reached Roseau, the capital and port of Dominica, on the 19th. This island was originally French, and they found the French language and Roman Catholic religion still prevalent. The Anglican rector and Wesleyan missionaries were, however, active, and found scope for their efforts. Coffee had been a chief staple of the colony, but its production was rapidly declining from the effects of blight. A numerous class of small coloured proprietors were greatly impoverished by this cause. The sugar estates were maintaining their average production. The negroes were found in a far less advanced condition than those of Antigua; and drunkenness, rare in the latter island, was here and also at Montserrat a prevailing vice, the pernicious appetite being fostered, if not created, by the practice of giving drams of spirits to the labourer in damp weather, and for extra work. The apprenticeship system was too generally employed on the more important estates, not as a time of preparation, but as a medium of coercion, with a reckless disregard of the future. To avoid repetition, details on this subject are reserved for consideration in connection with the larger colonies.

The travellers were exceedingly impressed with the wild and magnificent scenery of Dominica, 'a land of mist and rainbows, and mountain torrents.' One of their excursions was to the Souffriere, from whence an exportation of sulphur has occasionally taken place. They also visited a few of the French Creole planters on their mountain properties, and found here and there among them delightful evidences of a genial and

humane spirit. A recently deceased proprietor of this class had systematically instructed his negroes with the intention to set them free, but died before he had overcome the obstacles interposed by the encumbrances on his estate. 'He used to present mothers with the freedom of their first child born in lawful wedlock, a measure attended with the happiest results.' Another old Frenchman of eighty-five, venerable as a patriarch, and dwelling as a father among his people, gave the visitors a hearty welcome, and his best wishes for the success of 'the good cause' of emancipation. On such properties as these there was a rapid increase of population. 'Nothing can be a greater contrast,' said the travellers, 'than the condition, appearance, and manners of the people on some of these properties of the old French residents, and of those on even the well-managed English estates.'* Decreasing numbers was the rule on the latter.

Some of the coloured inhabitants of Roseau were men of high intelligence, liberal sentiments, and public spirit. Much was to be anticipated from their influence on the future social progress of Dominica.

During his stay in Dominica, Joseph Sturge had put into his hands copies of several petitions to the French Chambers, for the immediate abolition of slavery, from certain free coloured inhabitants of Martinique. He, therefore, concluded to call at this island on the way to St. Lucia. The vessel touched first at the beautiful town of St. Pierre, where some hours were diligently spent in enquiry into the state of slavery on the island, and the progress of anti-slavery opinion. In the evening they proceeded to Fort Royal, the capital, and called

* *West Indies in 1837*, p. 90.

the next day on the governor, the Baron de Mackau, with whom they had a long and agreeable interview. The baron had not long before paid a visit to Antigua, and his mind was evidently occupied with the great question. From his mild and benevolent aspect, and the interest he expressed in the views presented to him, the travellers drew favourable auguries; yet when he afterwards filled the post of Minister of the Marine and Colonies under Guizot, he failed to give effect to the expectations of the friends of the slave. Martinique was affected in no slight degree by the important change in the adjacent British islands—property depreciated, and enterprise languished under the cloud of uncertainty that hung over the future of the French colonies, and the intentions of the home government. The escape of slaves across the twenty miles of sea, which separated Martinique from a British colony on either hand, was a constant source of loss, irritation, and expense, 2,000 soldiers and gendarmes being picketed in small parties over the island, to check depopulation from this cause. ‘Of 3,000 slaves who have thus disappeared from Martinique, only 1,200 are accounted for as having reached the British islands (Dominica and St. Lucia), so that it would appear, nearly two-thirds perish in the attempt to regain freedom.’ In one word, the French West Indies were groaning under evils which emancipation alone could remedy. All was ripe for the change but the government at home.

A night voyage from Martinique brought the travellers to Castries, in St. Lucia, situated on the fine and spacious harbour of that name. St. Lucia resembles Dominica in its grand and varied mountain scenery, and prodigal luxuriance of vegetable life,

as well as in its social aspects and the general prevalence of the language and religion of France. An influential resident assured the visitors that 'not a ray of light had reached the island from any of the religious or benevolent societies of Great Britain.' In its industrial state and prospects it had also much in common with Dominica; but St. Lucia had recently been the scene of the labours of the late Sir John Jeremie, who, as President of its Royal Court, had left the impress of his genius and force of character on the institutions and destinies of the colony. Long before an Encumbered Estates' Court was thought of for Ireland, he had conceived and carried into effect such a measure in this island, and had thereby removed the greatest obstacle to its future prosperity. Many important public works were begun and perfected through his influence. Even his opponents were now willing to honour his character by confessing him 'the greatest man who ever came to St. Lucia;' while his humane and upright administration gained him among the negroes the appellation of 'Père Président.'

Leaving St. Lucia, Joseph Sturge and his companions reached Bridgetown, Barbados, on December 28, and spent a fortnight on this interesting island, which presented then, as it does still, an example of agricultural prosperity unequalled in the West Indies. Besides supporting its own dense population, Barbados exported at this time sugar to the annual value of three-quarters of a million sterling. The surface of the island is varied, and runs up towards the north into rocky and broken hills.

Though it has no pretensions to the magnificent scenery and redundant forest and parasitical vegetation of the mountainous islands, it has in great perfection

a beauty of its own—that of art and high cultivation. Every available acre being tilled by the direct application of human labour, the rural parts exhibit an endless succession of fields of sugar-cane, guinea-corn, maize, yams, eddoes, and the sweet-potato, thickly interspersed with wind-mills, sugar-works, mansions, and the villages of the negroes.

Barbados possessed, at this time, a numerous and wealthy resident proprietary, and abundance of religious and educational institutions in a state of considerable efficiency. Strangely enough, its material prosperity has been traced to 'an exhausted soil.' Towards the close of last century, 'by repeated croppings, the soil of Barbados had become so much worn as to be almost unproductive in the sugar-cane; but by the substitution of other crops, particularly guinea-corn, a system of soiling and tethering cattle was introduced, which has not only been the means of retrieving the lands, but has, perhaps, made them more productive than ever.'* Wonderful as the productive energies of the colony appeared in 1836, it is well-known they have since very greatly increased under the system of free-labour, of the success of which Barbados is a signal example. It possesses no advantage now that it did not possess then, free-labour only excepted.

The wealthy and unencumbered planters of this island were, however, less influenced by humane and generous feeling than their brethren in Antigua. They submitted with the worst possible grace to the imperial policy, and their legislature was the last to pass an act to give effect to the abolition of slavery. No voice was raised in favour of rejecting the apprenticeship, in order to enter at once on complete emancipation, though no

* Dr. Nugent's *Report of Antigua Agricultural Association.*

colony was so favourably situated for carrying into effect so humane and just a measure. Soon after the new order of things had commenced, an attempt was made to bring the children under six years old, who were free by the Imperial Act, under a contract of apprenticeship until they had attained adult age. By this means a servile condition of a large proportion of the labouring class would have been perpetuated. The parents strenuously resisted this scheme, and were encouraged in their resistance by the Governor, Sir Lionel Smith. In their anger and disappointment many planters turned the free children off the estates; and though this policy was not long persevered in on the broad scale, the same cruel measure was frequently adopted by individuals.

During slavery the care of infant children had been sedulously attended to, as one of the most important details of plantation management. Very few, in proportion to the whole number, were the properties on which the same care of infant life continued; and, in general, the children were barely tolerated to live with their parents. The mortality among them had, consequently, been very great since 1834. The boon of freedom granted to the helpless infants had been made a source of misery and bitter persecution to the negro mothers.*

The Appendix to 'The West Indies in 1837,' under the head 'Barbados,' contains copious details of the working of the apprenticeship system, and need only be consulted to prove how irritating and oppressive it was in the very nature of things, as well as from the infirm and partial conduct of its administrators. Ex-

* *West Indies in 1837*, p. 123, and *passim*.

cessive mulcts of time, the negroes' Saturdays, were the prevailing penalty; and the apprentices, male and female, were often brought before the magistrate, not singly, but in gangs, and fined three, four, or six of their 'Saturdays' for the benefit of the estates. The gaol and treadmill were also freely used to coerce labour; and for such offences as 'linen badly washed and impertinence; doing only half as much in potato-hoeing one day as they did the day before,' women were sentenced to 'seven days treadmill, first class,' and had their hair close-cropped as if they had been criminals of 'the first class.'

The moving force of the apprenticeship system was *physical coercion*, precisely the same as in absolute slavery, the difference being only this: that in slavery compulsory power was wielded by the master at his own will, while in the apprenticeship it was enforced through his influence and for his benefit by officers of the Government. The negro was told he was a slave no longer, and he was then driven to the field and compelled as effectually as before to render his unrequited toil for his master's benefit.

Besides the inevitable amount of friction created in due course of law, the system had numberless independent sources of irritation. If parents were refractory the free children were persecuted; complaining negroes had their goats and poultry killed; in some cases the houses of the people were pulled down and sheds erected in their stead, six feet by seven, just wide enough to come within the letter of the law requiring 'lodging' to be provided, &c. &c.*

It will be remembered that the other members of

* *West Indies in 1837*, p. 126.

this exploring party, John Scoble and Dr. Lloyd, had remained two or three days in Barbados before proceeding to Demerara. They visited the gaol at Bridgetown, and witnessed scenes of cruelty and oppression which are too painful for the description to be reproduced here. In the short interval that had elapsed, Sir Evan M'Gregor, who had very lately assumed the government, had discovered and corrected some of the most flagrant evils. Yet on visiting the gaol a few weeks later, Joseph Sturge and his companion found it still teeming with abuses. Women and infirm aged men were put on the treadmill, and if they could not keep step, were held on by their arms from above, the revolving wheel battering their tortured limbs. The prisoners' heads were all cropped close. In one room were twenty men, who had been tried and found 'not guilty,' detained until they each paid twelve and half dollars for the fees of prosecution. In another apartment were several detained for trial, whose cases were postponed from the last assizes *at the request of the prosecutor to the Attorney-General*. As the assizes were held only twice a year, this was equivalent to an infliction of six months' imprisonment without trial on possibly innocent men.

These and other important facts were brought under the notice of the Governor. On shortly after visiting the Assembly, our Friends had the pleasure of listening to a long and able speech from the Solicitor-General, in which, by a coincidence too marked to be accidental, he touched upon the principal topics that had been dwelt upon in their letter to Sir E. M'Gregor, and dexterously held out hopes of a more frequent gaol-delivery and various other much-needed reforms.

This visit to Barbados occurred at a critical juncture.

Advantage had been taken of the arrival of a new Governor to revive the cherished project of a general apprenticeship of young free children. So vital a question did not fail to engage the earnest attention of Joseph Sturge and his colleague. They found that the design was seriously entertained and met with support in high quarters. The danger was imminent that an Act with the needful powers would be speedily passed by the island Legislature, and they had no confidence that such a measure would not be sanctioned by the Colonial Office. They felt it their duty to seek interviews on the subject with the Governor and the Solicitor-General, as well as with some non-official persons of position and influence. As the question was an exciting one, more of collision ensued with the views and feelings of others than was agreeable to the visitors; and though it was far from their wish to be taken as 'representative men,' yet they had afterwards reason to believe that they had unintentionally given the impression to the patrons of this scheme, that to persevere in it would bring the colony into conflict with the whole anti-slavery feeling of the mother country.

After their return home they had the satisfaction of learning that the measure had been silently dropped, and the project of planting a new germ of involuntary servitude in the island of Barbados finally abandoned.

At the commencement of this mission Joseph Sturge had perceived the importance of not occupying himself with special grievances or seeking local redress for wrongs, whether individual or general. His purpose was to ascertain the working of the apprenticeship system on the broadest scale, and to report his observations to the people of England, who had so deep an

interest in the result. In Barbados, in the emergency above explained, he was led to depart from his general policy. With his views and feelings he could not have done otherwise. Yet the result fully verified the wisdom of the course of proceeding he had first laid down, and convinced him that if he would accomplish, within the needful time, the great object of his journey, he must often be 'as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.'

On January 13, 1837, they embarked in the 'Echo' steamer for Jamaica. This vessel had come out to ply as a mailboat between the islands, but was at present engaged in conveying Commander (now Sir Edward) Belcher, R.N., to the port of Chagres on the isthmus of Panama, whence he was to proceed to take the command of a surveying squadron in the Pacific. After a tranquil and prosperous voyage they reached Jamaica on the 22nd inst.

It has been already mentioned that, immediately on the visitors landing in Jamaica, their lost packet of letters of introduction was unexpectedly restored. They had, however, little need to make use of these credentials. Joseph Sturge was endowed with a presence singularly expressive of his benevolent and large-hearted nature, and perhaps in no man were the apparent opposites of gentleness and firmness ever more harmoniously blended. Wherever he presented himself he was received with respect and often with cordiality; although the object of his visit was known to everybody, and although he constantly reiterated his resolve to withhold the expression of his judgment upon what he saw and heard until his return to England.

His investigations in Jamaica were pursued with the greatest diligence, prudence, and success. He obtained

access to persons of all grades in society. At Spanish Town, the seat of Government, the Governor, Sir Lionel Smith, the Attorney-General, many of the special magistrates, and especially Richard Hill, Esq., secretary for the Stipendary Magistrates' department, J. M. Phillippo, the eminent Baptist missionary and many planters, professional men, and others, courteously responded to his call for assistance in his enquiries. But more important than all were the opportunities that occurred of conferring with great numbers of the negro apprentices themselves in many parts of the island, and of taking down their depositions from their own lips. This evidence Joseph Sturge and his fellow-labourer tested in a variety of ways, so as not only to assure themselves of its truth, but to enable them in case of need to produce it in full confidence that it could not be shaken.

It will be obvious that the results of three months of strenuous labour, the report of which occupies the larger half of an octavo volume, cannot be adequately presented here. A slight and general sketch must suffice. After spending a short time at Kingston and Spanish Town, and visiting various plantations and the courts of stipendiary magistrates in the vicinity of these important towns, Joseph Sturge purchased a conveyance and horses and proceeded with his companion on a tour, extending over the larger part of this magnificent island. Their route from Spanish Town, along the romantic banks of the Rio Colne, conducted them to their first halting place at Jericho, the house and station of John Clarke, Baptist missionary, in the inland parish of St. Thomas in the Vale. Here their investigations commenced in the *virâ voce* examination of the people. Their estimable host had laboured long and

successfully in this island—he afterwards led the way as a missionary pioneer in Fernando Po and the adjacent parts of West Africa, and now he has again returned to spend the evening of his days in Jamaica—single in the great object of his dedicated life to impart the saving knowledge of Christ to the oppressed children of Ham.

Leaving Jericho, they wound their difficult way, by a long ascent significantly termed Mount Diabolo, into the parish of St. Ann, resting a night at the Moneague tavern. Next day, after laying a planter of the neighbourhood under contribution for information, they proceeded to St. Ann's Bay, where they were again the guests of a hospitable missionary, T. F. Abbott. Here they inspected the gaol and workhouse, rode to the place where the penal gang was at work, visited one important estate, and examined negroes from seven other plantations. They also called on the Wesleyan missionary, and on the rector of the parish, the eloquent historian of the island. The situation of this gentleman moved their Christian sympathies to the very depths. Some weeks before, while boating on the bay, three lovely grown-up daughters had been drowned in his own sight. The life and reason of the unhappy parent barely survived the shock. Until this time his chief earthly comforter had been the dissenting missionary, but he had never quitted the small room where he had retired immediately after the accident, and where, having collected his children's little treasures, he lay surrounded by all that could remind him of his loss. The unexpected visit of Joseph Sturge had a happy effect. The prostrate man was raised from his couch and induced to return to society. A few months afterwards he quitted the island and became a volun-

tary exile in the Far West, and afterwards a wanderer in the East. Many years afterwards the intercourse thus begun was renewed in this country at a time when each seemed to have reached the tranquil evening of an eventful life.

Leaving St. Ann's Bay, the travellers pursued their way to Brown's Town, in the interior of this parish, and the residence of another Baptist missionary, John Clark, a young man already surrounded with flourishing schools and congregation, and who has steadfastly laboured ever since in the same locality, with the blessing from on high visibly resting on his 'patient continuance in well-doing.' From the more intelligent members of his church most important details, often of graphic and thrilling interest, were obtained of the practical working of the apprenticeship.

Leaving Brown's Town, they proceeded across this most beautiful mountain parish (St. Ann's) into Trelawney, visiting *en route* the 'Retreat Pen,' a cattle farm belonging to S. M. Barrett, Esq., formerly M. P. for Richmond. This magnificent property was under the management of Samuels, a black man, formerly a slave, and was in the highest state of cultivation and order. The hospital, school, and the prosperous condition of the people on the estate were all highly satisfactory. Samuels, himself, was a noble specimen of humanity; a worthy Christian and a first-rate administrator. He attributed his success largely to the influence of Christianity. Before the missionaries came among them, there used to be frequent broils—now all was order and peace. A large proportion of the people were Wesleyans and Baptists. A few years ago none were married; at this time there were only two unmarried mothers of families on the property.

In the important parishes of Trelawney and St. James they spent some days at Falmouth and Montego Bay, the scenes of the labours and sufferings of the heroic missionaries, Burchell and Knibb, both of whom were still living, and still undergoing almost incredible toils in this tropical clime, for the benefit, temporal and spiritual, of the negro population. Here they pursued the usual investigations, visited the schools, prisons, and numerous important estates. A few of these were examples of liberal and humane management.

While in this neighbourhood they made the acquaintance of John Vine, of the London Missionary Society, who had lately resided on Arcadia, an estate belonging to W. A. Hankey, Esq. The circumstances relative to this property narrated in 'The West Indies in 1837,' caused that gentleman to publish a pamphlet in which he complained heavily of misrepresentation. The rejoinder by Sturge and Harvey, published separately and also in the Appendix to the second edition of their work, not only established their first allegations, but brought to view new and serious counts of indictment against the management of this property. This pamphlet was never replied to, and that it produced some effect on the convictions of the proprietor of Arcadia may be inferred from the fact that he gave his negroes their entire freedom shortly afterwards. This was the only serious attempt that was made to impugn the accuracy of the statements made in Sturge and Harvey's volume.

From Montego Bay they proceeded to Lucea in the parish of Hanover, near the north-western extremity of the island, where they were hospitably received by John Stainsby, the rector. This good man, on account of his evangelical piety and his sympathy with the oppressed, had in times past endured much obloquy and persecution.

Here they paid a visit, as usual, to the workhouse. Crossing the western end of the island from north to south, they rested a short time at Savanna le Mar, visiting the workhouse and other places that were of interest in reference to their mission. They proceeded thence to Hopton, in St. Elizabeth's parish, the estate and residence of Hutchinson Scott, Esq., whose name recalls two of the judges of Charles the First, one or both of whom are numbered among his ancestry. This pious and benevolent planter and his lady had introduced every ameliorating provision of the Abolition Act long before 1834; night-work during crop had been done away, and not only the comfort and health, but the moral and religious welfare of the people anxiously promoted. In his evidence before a committee of the House of Assembly in 1833, H. Scott, Esq. declared 'nothing is wanting to make the cane what a beneficent Creator designed it to be—one of His chosen gifts to man—but the regulations of an enlightened government, with some salutary check on the cupidity of the cultivator.'

After a *détour* by Joseph Sturge alone to Black River to inspect the gaol and workhouse, the travellers proceeded through the parish of St. Elizabeth, calling at Comfort, a central station of the Mico educational charity, to Mandeville, in the parish of Manchester. Here for the first and only time they were refused admission to view the workhouse. They proceeded on their way to Porus and Four Paths, stations of the London Society, where the missionaries Slatyer and Barrett were respectively labouring with zeal and success. They returned to Spanish Town on March 20. On the 5th of the following month Joseph Sturge embarked for England.

Dr. Lloyd, who arrived near the same time from Demerara, subsequently joined T. Harvey in a similar visit to the east end of the island, occupied chiefly by the rich and beautiful parish of St. Thomas in the East.

'The results of the Apprenticeship in Jamaica,' is the title of the seventeenth chapter of 'The West Indies in 1837,' which presents a clear and condensed summary of the evidence collected by Joseph Sturge and his fellow-labourers. The case scarcely admits of being put more briefly; yet the importance of the subject requires some illustration here.

The proportion of proprietors of important estates *resident* in the island was very small. The large properties were nearly all controlled by agents holding powers of attorney, and hence called 'planting attorneys.' These formed a small but highly influential class, living in the chief towns, and many of them occupying seats on the bench and in the legislature. Under them and residing on the estates were overseers and book-keepers. This class of men had been accustomed to exercise despotic power over the negroes, with very few and feeble checks. Marriage was all but unknown among them, and indeed would in nearly all cases have entailed immediate dismissal from employment. The men thus exposed to influences in the last degree debasing and corrupting, far removed from the sweet charities of domestic life and the restraining power of a healthy public opinion, were they who were expected to perform the delicate task of adjusting the routine of plantation discipline to the new order of things. With some generous exceptions, the only feature of the apprenticeship they could appreciate was its power of coercion. The planting interest on the spot was thus represented

by men who smarted under the loss of power and authority, but very few of whom had any stake in the property of the island.

The special stipendiary magistrates, by whom the law was administered, were of very various character and qualifications. They were inadequately paid, and in the absence of inns were necessarily dependent on the planters for hospitality on their official visits to the estates. Some were truly noble-minded men, who struggled heroically with the immense difficulties of their position; others were of average capacity, of good intentions but of little strength of purpose, while many succumbed readily to the influences that beset them, and became willing instruments of the old slave-holding spirit.

The mode by which the slave-population was subsisted had much effect in shaping the new forms that the old oppression assumed. In Antigua and Barbados the negroes were fed either by imported supplies, or with yams and other provisions grown upon the estates as part of the routine of cultivation; but in Jamaica, except two or three pounds of salt-fish per week, the negro raised his own food on mountain lands belonging to the estate, the time allowed for this purpose being fixed by the abolition law at four and a half hours per week in addition to Saturday.*

That the coercive powers of the new law were freely

* The mode by which they raised their own support, in the opinion of our travellers, imparted to the negroes of Jamaica a force of character and self-reliance which distinguished them from the population of some other colonies. The same circumstance has since exercised a powerful influence on the fortunes of the colony. To grow their own provisions is a sort of second nature with the labourer in Jamaica, whether employed in town or country. The possession of land is an object of intense desire; and hence the immense number of small freeholds that have been created since emancipation.

and even wantonly put in force is evident from this short statement:—

‘During the first two years, 60,000 apprentices were punished (by the special magistrates in Jamaica) to an extent, in the aggregate, of a quarter of a million of lashes, and 50,000 other punishments, by the tread-mill, chain-gang, solitary confinement, and mulcts of time.’*

The workhouse discipline of the island was of the most cruel character. The treadmills were sheer instruments of torture. The visit to the ‘workhouse’ at St. Ann’s Bay may be taken as an example:—

‘The tread-mill at this workhouse is a cylinder, about eight feet in diameter, with broad steps. The hand-rail above it has eight pairs of straps, by which the prisoners are secured by the wrists. Every step is stained with blood, both recent and old. It had been shed so profusely, that even the sand on the floor was thickly besprinkled. We asked the deputy whether the prisoners on the tread-wheel were flogged. He replied, that it was necessary to touch them up—*women* as well as men. . . . The whip, which we asked to see, is a cat composed of nine lashes of knotted small cords. The driver of the penal gang, superintendent of the tread-mill, and other similar functionaries in this as well as in the other workhouses, *are taken out of the gang of life convicts.*’

At six A.M. next day they went to see the treadmill in operation:—

‘Two mixed gangs of men and women were put upon it during our stay; the latter had no suitable dress, and were, therefore, liable to be indecently exposed. The lever by which the speed of the wheel is regulated was held the whole time by the driver, who sometimes relaxed his hold for a few seconds, which made it revolve with such rapidity as to throw all the prisoners off. Thus the punishment can be increased

* *West Indies in 1837*, p. 338.

beyond endurance at his caprice. One of the prisoners told us he was sent because a *cattle* (a steer) died under his charge. We observed this morning, that not only was the floor sprinkled and the steps stained, but the very drum of the mill was spotted with blood. If the prisoners cannot keep step, they are suffered to hang, battered by the wheel, till the time expires. The old woman mentioned to us yesterday hung the whole time, as she could not keep step from the commencement. She was so much injured that she could not be put on the mill this morning; but that did not prevent her being sent to work in the penal-gang in chains and an iron collar. . . . We rode to the place where the penal-gang was at work, and saw this old woman. She was a small weakly creature. Her legs were most severely bruised and lacerated. We subsequently learned, from negroes on the same estate, that the late special magistrate had permitted her to *sit down* (discontinue labour) on account of her age, and that, when he was removed, she was set to mind sheep. One of them died, and she ran away two months through fear of punishment. This was her offence. Several other women also showed us the injuries they had sustained on the tread-mill. Two of them had infants in arms, and had been sent, as the driver expressed it, 'for not being able to please their overseer.' One old man was a pitiable object, both his body and limbs being swelled by dropsy to a great size. He had been apprehended as a runaway. The strong men in the gang were employed in digging materials for the road out of a deep gully, which the women and weakly men brought up by a steep path in baskets on their heads; and this poor negro, being too weak to carry a basket, was chained to two others, with whom he was compelled to climb up and down the difficult ascent.*

While in the street conversing with several persons, they saw the special magistrate of the district pass in his gig, in a state of intoxication, driven off in triumph by the book-keeper of a neighbouring estate to

* *West Indies in 1837*, pp. 187-191.

administer the Act for the Abolition of Slavery. Such was one of the men by whom this horrid workhouse at St. Ann's Bay was filled with victims. Far heavier, however, than the punishments inflicted by the magistrates were the sufferings that flowed from the capricious tyranny of the overseers, and for which there was no remedy :—

‘The provision-grounds of the apprentices are from one to fifteen miles distant from their huts; but in no case is any allowance of time made for going and returning. The watchmen have in numerous instances been taken away, and the provision-grounds consequently ruined by the trespass of cattle or by plunder. In some cases they have suffered to such an extent from these causes as to be compelled to throw up their grounds, and to depend for subsistence on the most casual and insufficient resources. On many estates the negroes have been deprived of their field-cooks, and thus obliged to labour through the day without food. . . . During illness the apprentices are supported by themselves or their relatives; and their young families and aged relations are also dependent on them for support. Their poultry and other live-stock are frequently wantonly destroyed by the overseers; and the small portion of time which is allowed them for procuring the necessaries of life is diminished, not only by the frauds practised on them by the planters, but by the mulcts of the special magistrates. . . . Many of them are suffering from the presence of actual want. . . . Every birth increases the difficulty to the negro mother of providing maintenance for offspring and of escaping punishment herself. . . . The treatment of pregnant women and nursing mothers is a feature of the apprenticeship by which it is unfavourably distinguished from the worst aspect of slavery. The indulgences which their situation required were, under the former system, imperfectly secured to them by the sordid interests of the proprietors. . . . All these indulgences have been curtailed, and in many instances

abolished, to the very extent of the capacity of the human frame for the endurance of suffering.'*

For further details we must refer to the volume itself from which our quotations are made.

The negro apprenticeship was an attempt to administer a system of slavery for a limited term of years by law ; that is, to regulate, by the interference of Government, all the complicated details of the employment, subsistence, lodging, clothing, and medical care of the whole mass of the labouring population—men, women, and children—the strong men and the weak, the hale and the sickly, the docile and the stubborn. To perform this task with a just regard to the rights solemnly conferred on the negroes by the Imperial Parliament and ratified by the payment of twenty millions sterling to the planters, would have been simply impossible. The attempt was never earnestly made either by the local or Imperial Government. One special magistrate, Dr. Palmer, was dismissed, after the report of a commission of inquiry into his official conduct, which summed up his offences in the comprehensive phrase that he had ‘administered the abolition law in the spirit of the English Abolition Act.’ Joseph Sturge arrived at the conclusion that there had been a great violation of a solemn compact with the British people ; that the bulk of the population still groaned under some of the worst evils of slavery ; and that it was his duty to seek redress at the hands of parliament and by an appeal to the British public. As a time of preparation for freedom the apprenticeship was a conspicuous failure. The oppression of the labouring population, if not actually increased, was rendered more galling and

* *West Indies in 1837*, c. 17.

irritating by contrast with the hopes and promises with which the change was ushered in. The alienation of feeling between the two great classes of employers and labourers was increased ; and hence, at its close, *emancipation* took place under far less favourable auspices than if it had been proclaimed on the 1st of August, 1834.

CHAPTER VIII.

ABOLITION OF THE APPRENTICESHIP.

Mr. Sturge's Determination to overthrow the Apprenticeship—Combination of Influences opposed to him—Public Breakfast to him at Birmingham—His Speech on that Occasion—Visits other large Towns—The Anti-Slavery Committee refuses to move—Provisional Committee formed at Birmingham—Conference at Exeter Hall—Central Negro Emancipation Committee—Its Operations—The Country roused—Lord Brougham's Speech and Resolutions in the House of Lords—Appeal to the House of Commons—Meeting of Delegates in London—Sir George Strickland's Motion for the Abolition of Apprenticeship—Excitement in the House—The Debate—O'Connell's Speech—Motion defeated, but the Division a virtual Victory—Joseph Sturge goes to Work again—Another Meeting at Birmingham—Notice of another Motion by Sir J. Eardley Wilmot—Another Call of Delegates—The Motion is carried—Excitement in the Galleries—Letter of Mr. Buxton—The Government refuse to yield, and persuade the House to revoke its Decision—But the Colonial Legislatures act on the First Decision, and pass Acts of Emancipation—Joy of the Missionaries—Letters of Phillippo and Knibb—The British Government then accepts Emancipation—Act of Emancipation—Mr. Edward Baines' Description of it—Lord Brougham's Testimony as to who had done the Work—Celebration of the Day of Freedom at Birmingham—Public Meeting—Letters of Mr. O'Connell and Rev. J. A. James—Speech of Dr. Lushington—Letter of Mr. Buxton—Anecdote of Lord Brougham—Mr. Sturge's Speech at the Meeting—Celebration of the 1st of August in the West Indies—Good Behaviour of the Coloured People—Testimony of Mr. Phillippo—And of Sir Lionel Smith.

WHEN Mr. Sturge returned from the West Indies, he formed the fixed determination never to rest until he had effected the overthrow of the apprenticeship system, the flagrant and manifold evils of which he was now in

a condition to prove by ample evidence. This was, no doubt, a most arduous undertaking, which none but a man of resolute purpose, sustained by a deep consciousness of right, and an earnest conviction of religious duty, could have confronted. The obstacles that stood in the way of success were numerous and formidable. The Government was firmly opposed to any disturbance of the existing arrangement. All the leaders of parties in parliament turned coldly away from him. Many of the old friends of the Anti-slavery cause held aloof from the movement, as in their judgment imprudent and impracticable. The public mind, also, somewhat exhausted by the long and strenuous exertion which had been put forth prior to the passing of the Emancipation Act, had subsided into comparative apathy, and few things are more difficult than to rekindle the embers of an extinct agitation. Undaunted, however, by all these discouragements, Mr. Sturge resolved to make his appeal to the moral and religious feeling of the country. Birmingham, as it was the first to bid him God speed on his departure, so was also the first to greet him with cordial welcome on his return. Soon after his arrival in England, he was invited by his fellow-townsmen to a public breakfast in the town-hall, where he first unfolded his tale of oppression and suffering. The statement which he made at that meeting produced a great impression. It was afterwards published in a pamphlet, and circulated widely through the country, as was also the narrative of a negro apprentice, of the name of James Williams, whom he had redeemed from dreadful misery in Jamaica by purchasing his freedom, and had brought with him to England. He visited various other large towns, everywhere addressing crowded audiences, and by his per-

fectly simple and artless description of the scenes of hardship and cruelty he had witnessed himself, or learnt from the testimony of others whose evidence he could rely on, awakening strong indignation in the hearts of those who heard him. He appeared, also, before a committee of the House of Commons, by whom he was examined for seven days, and to whom he related, only in a form more circumstantial and minute, the same sad and truthful story. In order, however, to bring public opinion to bear on the legislature, it was necessary to adopt some mode of concerted action. The first and most obvious plan of doing this, was, of course, by applying to the old Anti-slavery committee in London to take the matter in hand, and use the organisation and influence at their disposal for rallying once more the scattered forces, which they had previously led to victory. This overture, however, was received with no favour. The torpor and timidity of age were gradually creeping over some of the excellent persons, who had hitherto taken the lead. The enterprise seemed to them rash and hopeless, and so they declined the responsibility of moving in it. But Mr. Sturge, though deeply grieved by this defection of old friends in his moment of need, was too much in earnest to be turned from his purpose, even by their disapproval. A provisional committee, therefore, was formed at Birmingham, which took the initiative in summoning a body of delegates to meet in London. A circular was accordingly issued, and responded to by 140 gentlemen, who assembled at Exeter Hall on the 14th of November, 1837, and sat in conference there for ten days. This body appointed a 'Central Negro Emancipation Committee,' which sent forth its agents and appeals throughout the country, to

tell the people of England how flagrantly they had been defrauded; how the Abolition Act, imperfect as it was in itself, was openly, systematically, and generally violated in the colonies; how the condition of apprenticeship was not only a perpetuation of slavery, in some respects, even in a more aggravated form than before, but was pregnant with disastrous possibilities on the future destinies of the negro; and how there was no remedy but the absolute, unconditional, and immediate abolition of the whole system of human bondage, under whatever form or name it existed.

The signal once given, the agitation spread with great rapidity throughout the country. The provincial societies were re-organised with a large infusion of fresh blood, public meetings were held in all the principal towns of the empire, some of the old voices rang out once more in eloquent tones over the land, while many younger men, who came then into the field for the first time, threw all the impulse of unworn energy and zeal into the conflict. In this case, too, the natural feelings of pity for the sufferings of the oppressed, and of resentment against the cruelties of the oppressor, were swollen by an indignant sense of the fraud that had been practised upon the nation. The people had submitted without a murmur to the sacrifice of twenty millions of money for the redemption of the slave, and they now found, after the money had been paid, that the slave was still the helpless victim of the planter's cupidity and caprice, groaning in as bitter a bondage as ever, and in the utmost danger, by the cunning application of vagrancy laws and police acts passed by the colonial legislatures, of having his chains riveted for an indefinite period even after the professed expiration of the term of apprenticeship. Everywhere the per-

sonal testimony of Mr. Sturge and his colleagues, whose veracity and disinterestedness were beyond impeachment, told with immense effect upon the public mind.

The first attempt to give effect by Parliamentary action to the sentiment thus created in the country, was made by Lord Brougham in the House of Lords. Like most of those who had been parties to the measure of 1832, his lordship was, at first, extremely averse to any proposal tending to disturb that settlement. But when at length he was induced to examine the budget of evidence brought by Mr. Sturge and Mr. Scoble from the West Indies, as to the operation of the Apprenticeship Act, his indifference was changed into the liveliest indignation, and on February 20, 1838, he delivered one of the most masterly and eloquent speeches that ever fell even from his lips. The speech he concluded by moving a series of resolutions of which one was to the effect, 'That it is expedient that the period of predial apprenticeship in all the colonies should cease and determine on August 1, 1838.' But when the division was taken only seven peers were found to vote for the resolution.

The only hope that now remained was in making an appeal to the representatives of the people, over whom, of course, the public opinion that was so rife out of doors, might be expected to exercise much greater sway than it could on our hereditary legislators. That this appeal might be rendered as effectual as possible, there was another call of delegates on the eve of the day when the question was to be submitted to the House of Commons. On March 27, three hundred and sixty-four gentlemen met at Exeter Hall to reiterate their determination never to rest satisfied until every form and vestige of slavery was swept from the face of the British

dominions. On the 29th, Sir George Strickland proposed, and Mr. Joseph Pease seconded the resolution that had been agreed upon by the abolitionists, to the effect that the apprenticeship should cease on August 1, 1838. There was great excitement in the House. For days and weeks previously, petitions, having altogether upwards of a million signatures, had been pouring in, in a full stream, from all parts of the kingdom. Honourable members had been deluged with private letters from their constituents. The gentlemen from the country who had come to attend the conference at Exeter Hall, had spent a large portion of the previous two days in calling upon their representatives, to enforce by personal importunity the request so often before conveyed to them by petition and correspondence. All this had secured a very large attendance of members. The lobbies were crowded with the delegates, who waited to thrust a roll of petitions into the hands of their friends, or to whisper a last word of entreaty or warning into the ear of the lukewarm and vacillating. Great use was made of these facts, on both sides, in the course of the debate. The ministerial speakers bitterly complained of the influence that had been brought to bear upon members of the House, though it is difficult to conceive, if representation be anything more than a name, what right they had to complain of influence exercised in so legitimate a form and in so hallowed a cause. The supporters of the motion, on the other hand, turned to good account, as well they might, a spectacle so honourable to the character of our country, as that of hundreds of persons coming up at their own cost from all corners of the kingdom, not to press any demand in which their own interests, political or commercial, were involved, but moved solely by a sense of justice and

humanity, to plead the cause of the poor and of those that were ready to perish.

‘You have heard,’ exclaimed Mr. O’Connell at the close of an admirable speech in which he had exhausted the whole question, ‘You have heard within the House the noise occasioned by the congregated Dissenters who besiege your doors. And who are they that have raised this cry of immediate emancipation? Are they idle and violent agitators, who delight in the convulsions of the State and disregard social order; men who look to the chances of revolution as holding out the hope of their being possibly useful to their interests? No! They are the steadiest, soberest, most industrious, and most respectable men, differing from me in their religious forms, but holding out in their conduct the happy spectacle of religious zeal united with religious charity. They are men who do not care for distance of country or difference of clime, but risk their health as scattered missionaries of humanity, and have travelled at their own expense to the remotest corners of the globe, in order to indulge the noble gratification of doing the work of their God by benefiting his creatures.’

The whole weight of the government was thrown into the scale against the motion, and after two night’s debate it was defeated by a majority of 54 in a house of 484. But the wonder is, not that it was defeated, but that its promoters succeeded in commanding 215 votes on the division. For in truth it was a very singular contest, such an one as is seldom seen in Parliament. It was wholly removed from party interests or sympathies. All the leaders of the great parties, as we have already observed, were against the abolitionists. Not a single man of the high official class, from either side of the House, and, indeed, hardly any man who ever bore a conspicuous part in the debates, except Mr. O’Connell and Dr. Lushington, spoke or

voted in their favour. It was a struggle between the moral and religious sentiment of the country, and the obstinacy of a routine officialism, which rallied round it all placemen, past, present, and to come. We need not wonder that, under the circumstances, the friends of immediate emancipation felt that virtually they had achieved a great moral triumph. Instead, therefore, of being disheartened, they prepared to renew the conflict.

Inspired by the unflagging faith and courage of Joseph Sturge, the campaign, as usual, was opened at Birmingham. On April 19, a town meeting, called by the high bailiff, was held at the Town Hall, and petitions for the immediate abolition of the apprenticeship were again adopted, and this example was followed throughout the whole district. As the same motion could not be brought before Parliament a second time during the same session, the difficulty was evaded by altering its terms. Instead, therefore, of asking, that the apprenticeship should terminate on August 1, it was resolved to propose that 'negro apprenticeship in the British colonies should *immediately* cease and determine.' Notice of motion to this effect was given by Sir Eardley Wilmot for May 22. Once more the summons was sent forth to the friends of the slave, and once more, being the third time within six months, the delegates repaired in large numbers to London. But the House itself had grown more indifferent to the subject, and the attendance, therefore, on the appointed day, was comparatively thin, arising, partly, perhaps, from the suspicion that the abolitionists were hardly in earnest in their declared intention to bring the matter forward, or at least to push it to a division a second time. But whoever counted on this did not know the men. Sir Eardley Wilmot moved his resolution, which was seconded

by Mr. C. P. Villiers, and although the ministers put up Lord Stanley, the most accomplished orator in their ranks and the author of the Apprenticeship Act, to oppose the motion, they were defeated by a majority of three. The galleries, as usual on such occasions, were crowded with Quakers and other abolitionists, among whom was Thomas Fowell Buxton (not then himself a member of the House), drawn there by his intense interest in the subject, even though he questioned the expediency of the movement, and had refused to join in it. But when the result became known, he had a heart too generous and too true to the cause of the slave not to exult in the success which he had previously deemed impossible. Writing to a friend, describing the scene that ensued, when the division was declared, he says, with that pleasant touch of humour which gives such a charm to some of his letters:—

‘Athenæum, May 23, 1833.

‘I must write a line to tell you that Sturge and that party, whom we thought all in the wrong, are proved to be all in the right. A resolution for the immediate abolition of the apprenticeship was carried by a majority of three last night. The intelligence was received with such a shout by the Quakers (myself among the number), that we strangers were all turned out for rioting! I am right pleased.’

The Government, however, still refused to yield. It was written in the book of fate, whence it must be transferred to the page of history, that the final and real abolition of slavery should receive no help, but every hindrance, from the Whig ministry. Within a week of the day when Sir Eardley Wilmot's resolution was carried, they persuaded the House of Commons into a vote, virtually rescinding its previous decision. But it mattered

not. The sentence of death had been pronounced upon slavery by the voice of the British nation, and the ungracious intervention of those in power on its behalf did not avail to prolong its execrable existence. The West India colonies had been no unmindful observers of the remarkable scenes transacting in England, and after so unequivocal an expression of the public feeling, which they knew well, from the character of the men at the head of the movement, would be only repeated the next session with a still louder emphasis, they became aware that they could no longer keep hold of their prey. The colonial legislators alarmed at the agitation in England, and with the avowed wish, if possible, to prevent its further progress, determined themselves to confer liberty on their bondsmen. Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, the Virgin Islands, and, at last, Jamaica, passed Acts, declaring the apprenticeship at an end, and the slaves free on August 1, 1838, the very day proposed by the British abolitionists. The letters that now poured in upon Joseph Sturge from the missionaries in the West Indies show how full of joy, almost to bursting, their hearts were at seeing their poor flocks on the eve of being rescued from the hands of the oppressor. Well acquainted with the state of opinion in the colonies, they never seemed to have had a misgiving as to the issue when they saw the flame that had been kindled in England by Mr. Sturge and his colleagues on their return. Writing to Mr. Thomas Harvey on July 7, 1838, he gives a hasty summary of some of the communications he had just received from these good men.

‘As Edmund is going to send a letter, I have concluded to forward thee a parcel with some of the cheering news received this morning from Jamaica. Phillippo writes on the back

of his letter, up to the 10th of last month, "The Act has passed without a dissentient voice; on the 1st of August next Jamaica will be free." In his letter he says; "Last evening, when the result of the bill could not be mistaken, I held a meeting for thanksgiving to Almighty God for the joyous event. The hearts of the people seemed filled with gratitude to overflowing. On the 1st of August I expect we shall have a day of sacred joy unparalleled in the history of the world." Knibb writes after he had heard of the division on Sir George Strickland's motion: "Your defeat is a victory, and so the ministry will find it. The mighty moral force you have put forth cannot be resisted, nor can I doubt that the triumph is yours. The ministry might have had the glory, but it now belongs to the omnipotence of public opinion." In another letter he says: "My heart is too full to write in any connected manner; I breathe a freer air; my spirit bounds with gratitude; I see in this act tyranny abashed and confounded before truth, and I hear (sweet music!) the expiring groans of oppression throughout the world. Your kindness will excuse the haste of this. I could not help writing, my heart was so full. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name." I have letters also by the last two packets from Burchell, Baines, Tinson, Lyon, and Anderson. I cannot spare these letters at present, as I want to refer to one or two of them at a missionary meeting to-morrow.'

When the West Indians had thus, at last, been obliged to accept emancipation as inevitable, there was no course open or possible to the British Government but to acquiesce in and ratify the decisions of the colonial legislatures, and an act was accordingly passed, which, as Mr. Edward Baines, sen., then member for Leeds, said, 'though certainly not looking to acts of parliament for eloquence, contained a passage which appeared to him one of the most eloquent he knew of, either in history or legislation.' Here it is:—'That from the

first day of August 1838, all and every the persons hitherto held in slavery within any British colony shall be to all intents and purposes free and discharged of and from all manner of slavery, and shall be absolutely and for ever manumitted; and that the children to be born of such persons, and the offspring of such children, shall in like manner be free from their birth, and that from and after the first of August, slavery shall and is hereby utterly and for ever abolished throughout the British colonies, plantations, and possessions.' Lord Brougham, in a speech delivered in the House of Lords on the 16th of July, just after the tidings that Jamaica, the last to adopt such a measure, had passed an Emancipation Act, thus referred to the agency, by which this great triumph of freedom had been achieved:—

'He gave honour to those men who had been the objects of calumny which they regarded not, of suspicions which they despised, of vituperation which they allowed to pass by them as the empty air; he gave to such men as Joseph Sturge, John Scoble, Josiah Conder, and George Thompson, with whom he had been united as a most humble but most zealous coadjutor, the glory of that day, being as thoroughly persuaded as he was of his own existence, that, but for their efforts, that day would not have dawned upon them.'

When the first of August arrived, there was a great commemorative festival held at Birmingham. In the morning, a large number of the children of the day and Sunday schools were assembled and entertained at the Town Hall, after which they marched in procession to a piece of ground in Legge Street, where, in the presence of an immense assemblage of persons, Joseph Sturge laid the foundation for new schools, to be called 'The Negro Emancipation Schools.' In the evening there was a public meeting at the Town Hall, with

Sir Eardley Wilnot in the chair. The large room was filled to its utmost capacity, the platform being occupied by Mr. O'Connell, Dr. Lushington, Mr. Edward Baines, Mr. Charles Lushington, Mr. Benjamin Hawes, and a large number of the friends of the cause from various parts of the kingdom. Mr. O'Connell, in accepting the invitation to this meeting, wrote the following cordial and characteristic letter to Mr. Sturge:—

‘London, July 7, 1838.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—I will be, at a word, with you. Make one of your professed objects *to consider the propriety of forming a society to aid in the universal abolition of slavery*. If you do *that*, come what will, I am with you at Birmingham on the 1st of August. I could not promise unless I had an object of that importance in view. I do not adhere to any form of words. Use what terms you think most expedient, so that you show an intention *to take into consideration* slavery in other nations. Specify America if you choose, or leave the name out of your plan. But frame your announcement in such a way as to enable us to begin the work with the vile and sanguinary slaveholders of Republican America. I want to be *directly* at them. No more side-wind attacks; firing directly at the bull, as the seamen say, is my plan.

‘What ineffable delight it must afford you, my esteemed friend, to reflect that *your* exertions have created a flame before which the chains of two years' slavery of half a million, at the lowest calculation, of your fellow-men have melted away. But for *your* exertions the two years more of apprenticeship would certainly be inflicted, and every hour of these two years would become more and more aggravated in cruelty. If you had remained at home, it is perfectly clear—clear beyond any doubt—that these two years would have continued without remission. This is, indeed a proud thought for you, and in spite of any shrinking from praise,

all good men on earth will thank, and may our gracious God reward, you with eternal happiness, is my fervent prayer.

‘Begin a new and still more extensive career. Let us not delay or defer. This is a Christian work; let us begin with Christian zeal. Our voices will go over the Atlantic and cheer the worthy abolitionists in America, while the sound will tend to confound the sanguinary men who dare to call their fellow-beings their property, and doom man to hopeless servitude—to total ignorance and to all the disgusting vices which are produced by oppression upon ignorance.

‘Raise the white flag of *universal freedom*, and you will have me heart and hand at your side. We will move Britain and all Europe against the vile union of republicanism and slavery; and I hope soon to see the day when not a single American will be received in civilised society unless he belong to an anti-slavery union or body.

‘I have the honour to be,

‘My esteemed friend,

‘Yours most faithfully,

‘DANIEL O’CONNELL.’

The Rev. John Angell James, who had so long acted with Mr. Sturge in this cause, and cheered him on amid many difficulties by his sympathies and prayers, was now one of the foremost to rejoice in his friend’s joy, and to congratulate him on the great work which Providence had honoured him to be the instrument of accomplishing. Being unable to attend the meeting, he wrote to him the following letter:—

‘Woodside, July 30.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot resist the inclination I feel to address to you a few words of sincere and hearty congratulation on the glorious and, to myself, unexpected results of your noble and heroic struggles on behalf of the oppressed slaves. To you, under God, this blessed emancipation is to be traced. You were the chosen instrument of Providence

to awaken our sympathies, excite our energies, and elicit our efforts. I say not this in the way of flattery, but of grateful and holy acknowledgement. I would not be the means of striking out one spark of pride, of cherishing one emotion of undue self-complacency, as I believe you are too sensible of your dependence on Divine grace, and too conscious that all you have done has been accomplished by His help to allow what I say to do you harm. May your life be long spared to witness the growing happiness of a race for whom you have done and suffered in various ways so much.

‘I deeply regret that I shall not be able to be with you on Wednesday next. Sorry am I to be absent from my post when an opportunity thus presents itself for honouring our town by honouring you, and at the same time of expressing our united joy over an event, which, whether we view it in reference to the negroes themselves, or in reference to the cause of slavery generally, is one of the most interesting and important of modern times.

‘I shall be with you in spirit, and a distant partaker of your joy. May a feeling of thankfulness to God pervade all hearts, and all be disposed to go from one conquest of humanity to other battles against slavery as it exists, and the slave-trade as it is carried on, in other parts of the world.

‘Your sincere and grateful friend,

‘J. A. JAMES.’

It is a striking illustration of that ‘shrinking from praise,’ to which Mr. O’Connell refers, that in the resolutions presented to the meeting at Birmingham there was no mention made of Mr. Sturge, or any allusion whatever to his services. The omission was, no doubt, by his own earnest request.

But it was impossible, of course, to prevent the speakers from alluding, frequently in terms of high respect and admiration, to the disinterested zeal and unshaken courage by which he, a simple citizen of Birmingham, had contributed in so marked a degree

to the liberation from bondage of 800,000 human beings:—

‘My principal motive,’ said Dr. Lushington, and a more earnest, devoted, and unflinching friend of the slave was not to be found in the kingdom, ‘in coming here was to pay my humble testimony to the undaunted courage, the determined resolution, the powerful and unshaken principles of my honoured and excellent friend Joseph Sturge, which not merely led him to encounter the difficulties of a long voyage, and to forego the comforts of his own home, by going to the West Indies, but to do much more in persevering, unmoved and unshaken, against the cold feeling of the House of Commons, in urging his suit when his representations fell without effect on the unwilling ear of the British legislature; and at last, by dint of constant energy, having brought about that consummation which God had granted, and which they had now met to celebrate.’

But we may be sure that few things, amid all the gratifying incidents and associations of that day afforded sincerer pleasure to Mr. Sturge, than to receive the following generous and cordial letter from Sir T. F. Buxton:—

‘London, July 30, 1838.

‘MY DEAR STURGE,—All other feelings are absorbed in the sincere and deep satisfaction arising from the knowledge that in thirty-two hours from this time those chains that have been so weighty upon me for fifteen years, as upon the bodies of those who have borne them, are so soon to be broken. I bless God, that he who has always raised up agents such as the crisis required, sent you to the West Indies. I bless God, that during the apprenticeship not one act of violence against the person of a white man has, I believe, been perpetrated by a negro; and I cannot but express my grateful exultation that those whom the colonial law so recently reckoned “as brute beasts,” the fee simple absolute whereof resided in their owners, will so soon after the expiration of another day

be clothed with the full rights of man, and stand on a level with those who once would have thought it an insult to humanity, and almost an impiety to God, if any one had presumed to suppose that their "chattels" and themselves were equals.

'Let none of us forget that those who are emancipated will be assailed with many an attempt to curb and crush their liberty; nor that they want the compensation of the means of education—nor that two millions of human "chattels" in the East Indies require our protection—nor that the slave-trade (of all evils the monster-evil) still defiles and darkens one quarter of the globe. May that same public voice, which has now been so happily exerted, and under the influence of that same gracious Lord who has wrought its present victory, never be hushed while a taint of slavery remains!

'Your sincere and grateful friend,

'T. F. BUXTON.'

To which testimonies of Dr. Lushington and Sir T. F. Buxton, we may be permitted to add that of Lord Brougham. Mr. Cobden, in a letter to the biographer, says:—

'I remember a very graphic description which Lord Brougham gave me in a conversation at his house in Grafton Street of Joseph Sturge's conduct in the matter of the apprenticeship system, which he adduced as an illustration of our friend's indomitable energy. He told me of Mr. Sturge coming to him to arraign the conduct of the masters in the West Indies for oppressing their apprentices; how he (Brougham) laughed at him, deriding him in this fashion for proposing to abolish the apprenticeship: "Why, Joseph Sturge, how can you be such an old woman as to dream that you can revive the anti-slavery agitation to put an end to the apprenticeship?" how the quiet Quaker met him with this reply: "Lord Brougham, if when Lord Chancellor thou hadst a ward in chancery who was apprenticed, and his

master was violating the terms of indenture, what would'st thou do?" how he felt this as a home thrust, and replied, "Why, I should require good proof of the fact, Joseph Sturge, before I did anything:" how, our friend rejoined, "Then I must supply thee with the proof:" how he packed his portmanteau and quietly embarked for the West Indies, made a tour of the islands, collected the necessary evidence of the oppression that was being practised on the negro apprentices by their masters the planters: how he returned to England and commenced an agitation throughout the country to abolish the apprenticeship, to accomplish which it was necessary to re-organise all the old Anti-slavery Societies which had been dissolved, or had laid down their arms, happy to be relieved from their long and arduous labours: how he brought them again into the field and attained his object. This was the narrative of Lord Brougham, and well do I remember the very words in which in conclusion he awarded the whole merit to our friend. "*Joseph Sturge*," said he, "*won the game off his own bat.*"

It was characteristic of the sober, practical character of Mr. Sturge's mind, as well as the untiring ardour of his zeal, that in the speech he delivered at the commemorative meeting in Birmingham, instead of indulging, as most of the speakers very naturally did, in glowing, triumphant congratulations on the success already secured, his attention was directed almost exclusively to the work which yet remained to be done. After devoutly acknowledging that 'there was indeed enough in the present position of their great cause to call upon them to unite in a heart-felt expression of gratitude to the All-wise Disposer of events,' he adverted in a single sentence to the fact that 'through the mighty moral influence of the people of England, the sun had that day risen for the first time upon the freedom of a large majority of their sable brethren in

the British islands of the West.' And then, evidently fearful lest the friends of freedom should be lulled into security by their own success, and so be inclined to rest upon their laurels, he turns at once to spread out before them the vast expanse of land that had yet to be conquered for liberty :—

'It was not,' he said, 'chiefly for the purpose of addressing them in the language of congratulation that they had been invited to meet together on that occasion. Ready as was their chairman to sacrifice his political and personal feelings in this great cause, it was not for that alone they would have asked him to leave the bed of a sick son, whose illness was a source of intense anxiety, to preside at the present meeting; nor was it for this they invited the distinguished strangers who had favoured them with their company, to put themselves to so much inconvenience; but they asked their presence among them that evening, in order, if possible, to assist in *bringing what had been gained in aid of what yet remained to be accomplished*; and he wished to impress upon them, in the strongest manner, that though they had cause to thank God and take courage, they were only on the threshold of their labours.'

He then went on to remind them that even in the West Indies their work was far from complete :—

'They must not for a moment forget that they had not yet heard liberty was proclaimed to the negroes in any of the crown, nor yet in some of the chartered, colonies. . . . But what was much more important, they had to see that the infant liberties of their colonies were not crushed in the bud, and they had abundant evidence to show that nothing but the untiring vigilance of this country would prevent this.'

He then adverted to the slavery existing in some parts of our Indian Empire, and to the millions of the enslaved to be still found in the United States, in

Brazil, in Cuba and Porto Rico, and in the French, Danish, Dutch, and Portuguese colonies. He also dwelt upon the frightful extent to which, notwithstanding all the exertions of this country for more than thirty years, the slave-trade still prevailed, and repeated the profound conviction which he had so often expressed before, that there was no possible means of destroying the slave-trade but by destroying slavery.

It was in the spirit of these remarks that he certainly, for one, turned away, from that moment, from the contemplation of the victory in which he had borne so large a share, to gird himself afresh for a conflict which he knew would be painful and prolonged, and which in truth in his case ended only with life.

But while the friends of the slave were thus commemorating the day of his deliverance in England, how did the 1st of August pass in the West Indies? It passed in rapturous, exulting gladness, but also in the most absolute peaceableness. The people crowded the chapels on the evening of the 31st July, and remained there engaged in exercises of devotion until within a few minutes of twelve o'clock, when they all sank into profound silence waiting with breathless expectation the stroke of the hour which was to proclaim that the day of freedom had dawned, and then burst into a loud and long-continued shout of triumphant joy. 'Never,' says Mr. Knibb, 'never did I hear such a sound. The winds of freedom appeared to have been let loose. The very building shook at the strange yet sacred joy.' The following day was of course devoted to holiday festivities. On the morning all the places of worship were again thronged, while the faithful missionaries, who had laboured and suffered so much during the dark days of slavery, led the devout thanksgivings of their

emancipated flocks, and addressed to them earnest words of mixed congratulation and counsel. Afterwards there were processions, and banquets, and floating banners, and triumphal arches, and all other forms and symbols of gratitude and gladness, to which the newly-born freed men abandoned themselves with all the exuberant emotion of the simple, impulsive negro nature. There were enthusiastic and endless cheers for their friends, for those whom they knew had bravely fought their battles through years of labour and obloquy. The names of Clarkson, and Wilberforce, and Buxton, and Brougham, and Sturge oft awoke the echoes of the islands, and floated in loud acclaim far over the waves of the Caribbean sea, a tribute which, we believe, none of them would have exchanged for the loftiest strains of triumph that ever hailed the 'conquering hero' as he marched on his path of blood and glory. But not one act of riot or disorder disturbed the harmony of the scene. No law was broken. No social decorum was violated. No white person was insulted by word or gesture. 'Thus the period,' says the Rev. Mr. Phillippo, speaking of Jamaica, 'from which the worst consequences were apprehended passed away in peace, in harmony, and in safety. Not a *single instance* of violence or insubordination, of serious disagreement or of intemperance, so far as could be ascertained, occurred in any part of the island.' What contributed greatly to this result in that island, which was deemed the great focus of danger, was the manner in which the Governor, Sir Lionel Smith, thoroughly identified himself with the feelings of the people. He joined in their processions, shared their festivities, spoke to them kind words of encouragement and advice, and thus lent the sanction of his character and office to their

joyful celebration of freedom. For this, and for the uniform firmness with which he protected the rights of the negro, he was rewarded by the enthusiastic gratitude of the people, by the perfect peace and order which marked the whole period of his government, and by the cordial detestation of the planters.

Nor did this good conduct of the enfranchised slaves pass away with the occasion. When the commemoration of their freedom was over they went back steadily to work :—

‘There was no interruption,’ says Mr. Phillippo, ‘on the part of the labourers, to the ordinary cultivation or business. Commended for their past behaviour, encouraged and urged by ministers of all denominations to continue to exemplify their fitness for the boon they had received, as well as to facilitate the progress of emancipation in America, in the islands that surrounded them, and throughout the world, by a continuation of industrial habits for reasonable wages, the greater part appeared on the different properties on the Monday of the following week.’

A year after this, Sir Lionel Smith, to whom Mr. Sturge had transmitted a copy of a memorial presented by the Birmingham Anti-slavery Society to the Colonial Minister deprecating his removal from the Government of Jamaica, wrote of the coloured labourers in the following terms :—

‘No country in the world can show a better peasantry, and they have proved themselves deserving of the generosity of the nation and of the exertions of their friends. Having been in authority here when the great blessing of freedom was conferred on the much injured negroes, I have remained among them to the prejudice of all my private interests, hoping that, in a few months more, I should have been the

• Phillippo's *Jamaica*, p. 185.

happy instrument of seeing their liberty consolidated by just and wholesome laws. I revere the constitution of my country, but I could easily show that in the present state of Jamaica society we have not the materials for a real constitutional government, and constituted as the popular branch of the legislature now is, *no governor* will be permitted to do justice to the negro population. My recall, therefore, is of no consequence.'

We are aware that in thus commemorating the services of one man, there is some danger of doing apparent injustice to others whose labours and sacrifices also largely contributed to the accomplishment of the good work. It is hardly necessary to say that there were scores and hundreds of men, some in Parliament, and many out of Parliament, who bore a most honourable part in this final triumph of the cause of freedom, without whose cordial co-operation, Joseph Sturge would never have attained the consummation he so devoutly wished. If we abstain from mentioning names here, it is simply because it would be invidious, seeing the list would be necessarily incomplete. But we believe that of all the multitudes of brave men and women that rallied around him on his return from the West Indies, and so firmly stood by his side through the long conflict that ensued, not one would have hesitated to acknowledge, that he was really the animating spirit of the movement, that but for his faith, and courage, and perseverance, that 1st of August, 1838, would not have dawned as a day of jubilee upon 800,000 oppressed and degraded human beings.

We cannot better conclude this chapter than by the following beautiful lines from the pen of Miss Whittier, the sister of the distinguished American poet, a lady who seems to share in no small degree her brother's

poetical genius. They were written after Mr. Sturge's visit to America in 1841, but they refer more especially to his work in the West Indies. Mr. Whittier in sending them to his friend says:—

'Below I copy for thy sister some verses by *my* sister; they were not intended for thy eye, but I have taken the liberty of sending them at the risk of Elizabeth's displeasure':—

'Fair islands of the sunny sea! midst all rejoicing things
No more the wailing of the slave a wild discordance brings;
On the lifted brows of freemen the tropic breezes blow,
The mildew of the bondman's toil the land no more shall know.

'How swells from those green islands, where leaf and bird and flower
Are praising in their own sweet way the dawn of freedom's hour,
The holier resurrection-song from hearts rejoicing poured—
Praise for the gift of freedom—man's regal crown restored.

'How beautiful through all the green and tranquil summer land,
Uplifted as by miracle, the solemn churches stand!
The grass is hidden from the paths where waiting freemen throng,
Athirst and fainting for the cup of life denied so long. -

'Oh! blessed were the feet of him whose generous errand here
Was to bind up the broken heart, and dry the falling tear;
To lift again the fallen ones, a brother's robber hand
Had left in pain and wretchedness by the waysides of the land.

'The islands of the sea rejoice—the harvest-anthems rise—
The sower of the seed must own 'tis marvellous in his eyes;
An early labourer in the field with morning strength unshorn,
The burden of the weary noon hew well his faith has borne!

'Thanksgiving for the holy fruit!—Should not the labourer rest,
His earnest faith and works of love have been so richly blest?
The pride of all fair England shall these ocean-islands be,
Whose peasantry with joyful hearts keep ceaseless jubilee.

'Rest?—Never! While his countrymen have trampled hearts to bleed,
The stifled murmur of their wrongs his listening ear shall heed;
Where England's far dependencies her might—not mercy—know,
To all the crushed and suffering there his pitying love shall flow.

'The friend of freedom everywhere, how mourns he for our land,
The brand of whose hypocrisy burns on her guilty hand,—
Republicans, yet scorning the democracy of Right
While planting upon servile necks the tyrant foot of might!

'For as, with steady faith of heart and strength for ever new,
The champion of the island slave the conflict doth renew,
His labour here hath been to point the Pharisaic eye
Away from hollow word and form to where the wounded lie.

'How beautiful to us should seem the coming feet of such—
Their garments of self-sacrifice have healing in their touch;
Their gospel mission none may doubt, for they heed the Master's call,
Who, here, walked with the multitude, and sat at meat with all.'

CHAPTER IX.

CARE FOR THE EMANCIPATED NEGROES.

Acknowledgment by Mr. Sturge of others' Services—Dr. Palmer—Driven from his Office as Stipendiary Magistrate—Subscription raised for him in England—Mr. Charles Harvey—His Defence of the Negroes—These Gentlemen publicly entertained at Birmingham—The Marquis of Sligo—Becomes a Convert to Abolitionism—His liberal Conduct as Governor of Jamaica—A Testimonial from the Negroes to him—Mr. Sturge's continued Interest in the Coloured Population—Attempts made in the West Indies to coerce and defraud them—Police and Vagrancy Laws—Mr. Sturge's Intervention—Persecution of Missionaries—Subscriptions raised for them—'The West India Land Investment Company'—The Occasion and the Object of starting it—Successful Prosecution of the Scheme—But frustrated by a legal Difficulty—Mr. Sturge's personal Efforts to supply the Want—Education of the Negroes—'The Jamaica Education Society'—Importance of accustoming the Negroes to help themselves.

BEFORE proceeding to narrate the various measures which Mr. Sturge endeavoured to promote with a view to complete and consolidate the work so auspiciously commenced, we must pause for a moment to advert to the part he took in acknowledging the services of others who had laboured or suffered in the same cause. Most of the stipendiary magistrates appointed by the British Government to administer the law after the passing of the Emancipation Act of 1833, though they were sent out presumably as the official guardians of the negro, soon yielded to the temptation of trying to accommodate themselves as much as possible to the prejudices and interests of the planters, on whose good-will their own

comfort so largely depended. There were, however, some noble exceptions to this rule. Among these was Dr. Palmer, a stipendiary magistrate in Jamaica, who resolutely set himself to oppose the frauds and cruelties practised on the unfortunate slaves, and 'to administer the abolition law in the spirit of the Abolition Act.' For this he became the victim of incessant persecution by the dominant class, and was at last driven from his office. He came to England to expose the abuses of the apprenticeship system, and to seek redress of his own personal wrongs from the Colonial Office. He succeeded in the former, for his testimony was of great value to the abolitionists, but he failed in the latter, for the authorities at home treated him as a troublesome and impracticable man, who did not know how to keep official secrets. The friends of the cause of freedom, however, in England, by the exertions of Mr. Sturge and others raised a subscription of upwards of 1000*l.*, which they presented to Dr. Palmer as an expression of their respect and gratitude for his integrity and courage. Associated with him was another gentleman, Mr. Charles Harvey, a solicitor in Spanish Town, who had ventured to give his professional services, to defend the negroes against some very wanton aggressions made upon their rights by the planters. He also became involved in the same odium, and was, by means of some legal chicanery, prosecuted and fined for presuming to interfere between the master and his slave. These two gentlemen were invited down to Birmingham, and were entertained at a public breakfast at the Town Hall on the day after the commemorative festival already described.

Another pleasant duty devolved upon Mr. Sturge about this time. The Marquis of Sligo was governor of

Jamaica at the time when the Emancipation Act was passed. He was himself a West India proprietor, and, like most of his class, he was in favour of the system of colonial slavery until he became a member of the committee of the House of Lords, appointed in 1832 to receive evidence as to the condition of the slaves in our colonies. He came out of that enquiry with his views completely changed. 'I then became a convert,' such are his own words, 'from the very evidence adduced by the West India interest itself. I entered that room a colonial advocate. I left it a decided abolitionist.' Still, when he went out to Jamaica he believed that many of the representations of the anti-slavery party in this country were greatly exaggerated. But when from his official position he became more intimately acquainted with the working of the system, he 'discovered that the horrors of slavery were much greater than he had previously conceived, and found by personal experience that the reports he had heard of them in England, fell short, very short, of the sad reality.' When, therefore, he became aware of the oppressions to which the negroes were subjected, he endeavoured, with great firmness and magnanimity, to protect them in the enjoyment of their rights. This, of course, rendered him very unpopular with the planters. But he felt less difficulty from that cause than from the apathy or concealed hostility of the colonial office, which subsequently led to his resignation of the Government, in 1836. His just and humane conduct, had, however, made a deep impression on the hearts of the coloured population, and on his retirement they appointed a committee to receive their contributions for the purpose of expressing their feelings by some form of testimonial to his lordship. The money thus raised, amounting to

1000 dollars, was placed in the hands of Mr. Sturge, during his visit to Jamaica, with a request that he would, in conjunction with Mr. T. F. Buxton, Dr. Lushington, Sir George Stephen, and other friends of the negroes in England, arrange the best mode of presenting this testimonial of the gratitude of the apprentices for the protection afforded them during his lordship's administration, and the loss they had sustained by his removal from the Government. Before the wishes of the negroes could be carried into effect, the marquis added largely to those claims on their gratitude by declaring in his place in Parliament that, whatever might be its decision on the question of the apprenticeship, it was his determination to liberate the apprentices on his own estate on August 1, 1838, a declaration which greatly promoted the efforts then making for the abolition of the system. This induced the apprentices to raise additional funds, in order to render their testimonial more worthy of his lordship's acceptance. Ultimately a piece of plate, consisting of a magnificent candelabrum in the form of the Arica Palm (the West India tree of liberty), was presented to his lordship in March, 1839, by a deputation of the leading members of the anti-slavery party, among whom were Mr. Buxton, Dr. Lushington, Rev. John Dyer, Rev. John Burnet, Sir George Stephen, and Mr. Joseph Sturge, &c.

Mr. Sturge's interest in the coloured population of the West Indies, whom he had so largely helped to emancipate, did not cease on their attainment of liberty. To the end of his life he regarded them still as his clients, whose rights he was bound to protect, and whose well-being it was his pleasure to promote by every means in his power. Nor, indeed, was it safe for the friends of the slave in this country to relax their vigilance for an

instant, even after the work of emancipation had been legally completed by the abolition of the apprenticeship. Unhappily, acts of parliament cannot exorcise the *spirit* of oppression from the hearts of those who have been long accustomed to the exercise of irresponsible power over their fellow-men. Although the West India planters reluctantly yielded the last remnant of slavery when they found the moral pressure in England was too great to be resisted, they did so in no graceful or magnanimous spirit. On the contrary, true to that law of our evil nature, which makes the oppressor hate his victim all the more for having escaped from his grasp, they used every means in their power to mar the boon of freedom conferred by the mother-country. The first indication of this was given by the passing of sundry statutes by the local legislatures of several of the West India islands on the subjects of police and vagrancy which, under colour of salutary fiscal restraints, did, in fact, amount to a modified perpetuation of slavery. When this became known, the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society immediately addressed the Colonial Office on the subject, reminding the authorities there of the language used in the circular despatch of Lord Glenelg to the colonies, that 'the apprenticeship of the emancipated slaves should be immediately succeeded by personal freedom, in that full unlimited sense of the term in which it is used in reference to the other subjects of the British crown.' This remonstrance, followed by many of a similar nature from other Anti-slavery bodies, was attended with the desired effect. For shortly after there issued from the Colonial Office three orders in Council on the subject of marriage, vagrancy, and police, which proved that the Home Government

honestly designed to secure to the newly-enfranchised population the full benefit of the boon they had legally obtained.

But while thus balked in their attempt to entangle the liberated slave once more in the meshes of bondage by cunning colonial legislation, there were other means open to the planters of expressing their dislike to freedom, which they used with unsparing vindictiveness. There can be little doubt, as already intimated, that the perfect peace and order with which the transition from slavery to freedom was effected was owing, in a main degree, to the influence which the Christian missionaries had acquired and exercised over the minds of the people. But though the planters were thus indirectly indebted to these men for the safety of their lives and property, yet their hatred to them as the friends and protectors of the slave was so intense, that they lost no opportunity of harassing them by every means of annoyance in their power. In a country where the class from whom alone jurors were selected were all, more or less, implicated in that evil system which the missionaries were pledged to oppose, legal indictments became a safe and terrible instrument of oppression in the hands of their enemies. Accordingly, soon after the abolition of the apprenticeship, tidings reached England that, in Jamaica, various actions, principally for alleged libels, had been brought against the friends of the negro, in which the juries of course decided against the parties accused, and subjected them to enormous penalties. Among the victims of this system of legal persecution were Mr. Stainsby, a clergyman of the Church of England, and Mr. Oughton, a Baptist missionary, who were charged with libellous communications, on the ground of certain expressions

employed by them in private conversation, deploring the evil conduct which they witnessed around them. On the other hand, when Mr. Knibb, the eminent Baptist missionary, sought redress by an action against one of the colonial newspapers for the publication of a libel, which consisted of a tissue of the most monstrous and malignant falsehoods, the grand jury at once threw out the bill. Mr. Sturge refers to these facts in a letter to Mr. John Cropper, under date of August 8, 1839:—

‘I have a long letter from Stuart by the packet arrived this week. He finds things in so unfavourable a state in Jamaica, that he talks of staying there two or three months. The last account shows the planter party to be quite uppermost there. Stainsby has been fined 2,500*l.*! Lyon 250*l.*, and the editor of the “Falmouth Post” had a verdict against him, but judgment had not been pronounced. Knibb, also, had lost a trial, on an action for libel. I apprehend much of this has arisen from the removal of Sir Lionel Smith. We shall have, I fear, much to do there.’

He had no mind, however, to abandon those distant strugglers for the right, to be ruined by the malice of their enemies. Writing to the same correspondent two months later, he says:—

‘We met in London last week to consider the best means of raising funds to protect our persecuted Anti-slavery friends in Jamaica, and the annexed was agreed upon as a circular, and the names put down as the provisional committee, provided the latter will allow their names to stand. I engaged to ask if thou had any objection to have thy name among them. The committee meet at 27 New Broad Street, London, on 7th day next, the 5th inst., when they are very anxious to have a few names as subscribers to publish along with the address and list of committee. We want to bring out the list with 8 or 10 of 50*l.* each, if we can. G. W. Alexander and I intend to give that sum.’

Ultimately, a sum of more than 1,000*l.* was raised for the help of those sufferers for righteousness' sake.

There was another measure for the benefit of the coloured population of the West Indies, which about this period occupied, to a large extent, the time and attention of Mr. Sturge. Its object was to place within the reach of the liberated slaves the means of obtaining an independent settlement on the land, by the purchase of small freeholds, and the establishment of free villages. Some provisions of this nature became absolutely necessary, by the course which the planters thought fit to pursue towards their labourers after their emancipation. Instead of allowing the price of labour to adjust itself, according to the natural law of supply and demand, they entered into a combination to keep wages down, by drawing up an arbitrary scale at very low rates, which they mutually pledged themselves never to exceed. Unfortunately for them, there was a test of their own creation, by comparison with which it was easy to discover how grossly below the just value of labour were the prices they had fixed. Under the apprenticeship system, slaves were at liberty to purchase of their masters the remainder of their time. Some of them did so, or attempted to do. When complaints were made of the high rate of demand made by the planters for these unexpired years of the negroes' captivity, their reply was that the value of the services of the apprentice must be regulated by the value of labour in the market. And what was the value of this labour, as estimated by themselves, when they had *to sell* it? It seems to have varied from 2*s.* 4*d.* to 3*s.* 4*d.* currency, for the day's wages. But when they had *to buy* it of the recently made freedmen, the sum which they fixed for the day's wages was 10*d.*

currency, with the use of the cottages and grounds then in the labourers' occupation, which together would not, at the highest valuation, amount to more than 1s. 8d. Grossly unjust as was this attempt to 'oppress the hireling in his wages,' the planters had, or imagined they had, the means to compel the negroes to accept their own terms. The cottages and lands occupied by the coloured labourers, which, after the advent of freedom, they would of course have to hire, were on the planter's estates. The plan, therefore, was, if they refused to work at the proffered wages, to eject them from their tenements or to exact such ruinous rents as they would be utterly unable to pay. Preparations had been already made for carrying into effect this cruel system of coercion, for the attorneys, on some of the estates at least, had taken care to serve notices to quit on the negroes before the arrival of the day of emancipation, so as to be in instant readiness for the application of the screw. Ever since his visit to the West Indies, Mr. Sturge had been in active correspondence with the missionaries, who were the natural and only protectors of the people against the masters' oppression. He was early apprised, by these vigilant guardians of the poor, of this scheme in contemplation for defrauding the liberated slave of the just reward of his labour. And he determined, if possible, to defeat it. To this end, he promoted the formation of a company, to be called the 'West India Land Investment Company,' for the purchase of real property in the West Indies, to be afterwards sold or let in small lots to the negroes.

In February, 1839, he writes to Rev. John Clark :—

'I will mention to thee, confidentially, that some of us are trying to get up a little plan for the purchase of land, for the

establishment of free and independent negro villages, and if thou canst look out, without appearing to do so, for good spots for this purpose where land can be purchased on favourable terms, I shall be obliged to thee.'

A few months later, he writes again on the same subject to Mr. Clark, who, in his generous anxiety to protect the negroes, had himself bought some land for their use, and thus brought himself into some temporary embarrassment. He appears to have suggested that the projected company might assist him by a loan. To which Mr. Sturge replies:—

'Our land company is fairly afloat, but we have made no purchases. . . . I cannot give thee any prospect of loans from the company, but they may probably take some of thy lots off thy hand. I write in great haste, and sooner than thou shouldst be put to any great inconvenience in thy benevolent efforts, thou mayst draw upon me for 500*l.* sterling at 90 days, on loan for 6 months.'

In the prospectus of the Land Company, which was issued in September 1839, it is stated that the projectors of the company were confident their plan offered, commercially, sure and safe grounds for investment. 'At the same time,' proceeds this document, 'it must be borne in mind that the primary object of the promoters of this scheme, is to transfer the control of West India property gradually from those who have systematically opposed the advancement of the negroes in civilisation, knowledge, and Christianity, to such men as would really promote their moral and religious welfare, and also to afford places of refuge to those of the West India peasantry, who may be still harassed by various forms of oppression. The projectors are, therefore, anxious that the shares should fall into the

hands of such individuals, as would assist the attainment of the above objects.' This proposal was generously responded to by the wealthier members of the Anti-slavery party throughout the country. In a very short time, more than half of the required capital of 100,000*l.* had been subscribed, and other shares were being taken up rapidly, when a legal difficulty intervened. The company required the protection of a charter, or letters-patent, not only for the sake of limited liability, but, also, as furnishing the only practical security against injuries, which strangers might commit upon their property, and for enforcing contracts entered into in the colonies. The Government, however, refused to grant them this concession. An influential deputation of the gentlemen concerned in the undertaking waited upon Mr. Labouchere, who was then President of the Board of Trade, to explain its nature and objects. But though he fully recognised the benevolent motives of the projectors, and the probable advantage that would accrue to the liberated slaves from such an arrangement as that they proposed, yet, owing to the old prejudices then in greater force than now, against accumulation of land in mortmain, their application was ultimately disallowed, and the whole scheme, after great labour and cost, fell to the ground. There remained, therefore, for Mr. Sturge, only to do his utmost personally for the object he hoped to have accomplished by means of this association. He accordingly advanced considerable sums, on loan, to the different missionaries, to enable them to purchase land, on which the negroes might settle and build cottages, without being at the mercy of the planters. This was attended with the happiest effects. The independence of the people being thus secured, they

were in a position to treat with their employers as free labourers, on the question of wages, nor did they show any indisposition to work, when they could obtain such remuneration as supplied an adequate motive for working; while the prospect of investing their savings in small freeholds of their own was, of course, a strong stimulus to both industry and thrift. The following letter, from the Rev. John Clark to Mr. Sturge, refers to these matters:—

‘Brown’s Town, Jamaica : March 18, 1841.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your kind letter by Mr. Knibb was duly received. Most sincerely do I thank you for willingness to oblige and assist me, by allowing the 250*l.* (which ought long since to have been repaid) to lie over a few months longer, and also for your affectionate and faithful advice relative to the purchase of lands. The long and severe drought of last year greatly distressed the people, and rendered it impossible for many to pay the balances due on the land I bought for them, or I doubt not I should by this time have been able to repay you. . . . I fear I have trespassed too much on your kindness, and should have been distressed at not yet being able to pay you, but for your letter and the kind message sent by Mr. Knibb.

‘Although I involved myself in difficulties in procuring land for the people, I cannot regret it when I contrast the state of the people in this neighbourhood with that of those in other parts of the island where land could not be procured. We have here very few instances of tyrannical conduct on the part of the planters; if any occur the people have the remedy in their own hands. There is quite enough labour in the market. I hear no complaints against the people; they are labouring steadily and diligently. Many are rising in respectability, some cultivating their own freeholds, and others managing small properties for others. The desire for religious knowledge has not diminished. Our schools are well attended. At this, and Sturge-town stations, we have 1,500 children and

adults in the Sabbath-schools, and in the day-schools (including a branch school at Buxton), upwards of 500 children. We have lately commenced a school for elder girls, who had not, when in slavery, opportunities of obtaining instruction. Some attend two, others three and four days in the week. Near the whole of the black population of this parish are connected with one or the other of the religious societies. A good work is going on in all the congregations, and if God continues to bless the labours of those engaged in His work, as in former years, the time cannot be far distant when ignorance and crime will disappear, and pure and undefiled religion prevail.'

While Mr. Sturge was thus struggling to secure from invasion the freedom obtained at so much cost, he was not unmindful of the importance of fitting the liberated slave for the enjoyment of freedom, by placing within his reach the means of a better education. When he was in Jamaica in 1837, the Baptist missionaries in that island addressed an urgent appeal to him and his companion, Mr. Harvey, on this subject. The establishment and maintenance of day-schools did not, at that time, form part of the agency for which they could look for any help from the funds of the Society that sent them out. They were, however, deeply impressed themselves, as they state in the document referred to, with 'the absolute necessity of making vigorous exertions for the Scriptural instruction of the rising generation of the poor.' They described in strong terms, the almost insuperable difficulties with which they had to contend in this department of their labours, arising from want of permanent funds; and they besought their visitors on their return to England, to 'represent their case to the advocates of popular education at home (but more especially to the Society of Friends), in the earnest hope that they will be induced to form a society.

for the purpose of raising funds, to be placed in their hands as a local committee, to enable them to carry out their plans, in this particular, into immediate operation.' This charge was not forgotten. At the first Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, after his return from the West Indies, Mr. Sturge, in giving some account of the journey of himself and Mr. Harvey, took occasion to urge the appeal of the missionaries for help in their educational labours, with great earnestness on his co-religionists. A few months later, he issued another appeal in the form of a circular, which led to the formation of the 'Jamaica Education Society.' By means of this association, considerable sums were raised for many years, principally by the Society of Friends, and transmitted to the Baptist missionaries for educational purposes. Mr. Sturge was himself an annual subscriber of 50*l.*, often augmented by special donations to a much larger amount. But while thus labouring cheerfully to help the coloured people, he was fully alive to the importance of cultivating among them habits of self-help. He frequently urged this upon the attention of the missionaries. Thus, writing to the Rev. John Clark, August 27, 1838, he says:—

'I rejoice to hear that thou hast refused the proffered Government grant, and trust that the abolition of the apprenticeship will enable the negroes to do so much for themselves, that, with a little help from England you will be able to get on well without any infringement of the voluntary principle; and I feel persuaded this will add greatly to the extent and success of your labours. I think I know of from 500*l.* to 600*l.* likely to come in in a few weeks from various quarters, that may be had for your school societies. Charles Harvey, who is in my house, cordially unites with me in the observation that it will be greatly to the benefit of the negroes to do as much as possible for themselves, and I think their means

of doing so will shortly exceed those of any European labourers. In the mean time, I hope we shall not in the least degree relax our efforts to procure subscriptions in aid from here.'

A few months later, in a letter to the same correspondent, he returns to the subject:—

'Thou wilt I know agree with me that it will tend to the moral elevation of the negroes to pay as much as they possibly can for everything, schools, chapels, &c. If they can get fair and equitable wages, and if they are industrious, they will be one of the most prosperous peasantry in the world. I do not mention this, my dear friend, at all with a wish to spare my own pocket or those of my English friends, so far as I have access to them, but as soon as the people can be made independent of others in pecuniary matters I am persuaded it will add to their happiness and promote their moral education, for it is in human nature to value most what we pay for ourselves.'

CHAPTER X.

THE FORMATION OF THE NEW ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY AND THE FIRST WORLD'S CONVENTION.

The old Anti-Slavery Society extinct — Joseph Sturge's early idea of a Comprehensive Association against Slavery — Letter on that subject to William Forster — The idea deferred, but now resumed — Meeting of Delegates to form the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society — Its fundamental Principle — Difficulty in carrying it — Letters of Mr. Sturge on that subject to Mr. John Cropper and Mr. Lewis Tappan — The New Society calls a 'World's Convention' — Mr. Sturge's comprehensive plan — His labours in connection with the Convention — Letters to G. W. Alexander — Convention meets at Freemason's Hall — The elements of which it was composed — Thomas Clarkson — Haydon's description of the opening scene.

WE have already seen by the tenor of his remarks at the commemorative meeting at Birmingham, that Mr. Sturge's motto was, 'to bring what had been gained in aid of what yet remained to be accomplished.' When, therefore, the great labour and excitement through which he had to pass in connection with the apprenticeship question had somewhat subsided, he began, early in 1839, to take measures for the formation of a new Society, for the systematic prosecution of the work which, as he then described, still remained to do. The old Anti-slavery Society had been virtually, if not formally, dissolved; and there was no body then in existence to be the representative and organ of the Anti-slavery sentiment, which recent events had proved was still strong in the heart of the nation.

It is clear, indeed, that the idea had long dwelt in the mind of Mr. Sturge of forming an association of a broader and more comprehensive character than any yet attempted, with a view to bring the intelligence and conscience of the civilised world to bear against the system of human bondage. So far back as 1833 he had broached this project to his friend, Mr. William Forster. In a letter to that gentleman, in May of the above year, he says :—

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—The little interchange of sentiment we had in London makes me desirous of endeavouring to impart to thee, rather more fully than I then did, what has a good deal occupied my own mind for some time past, namely, the consideration of what it might be the duty of our Society to do further in the great cause of abolition should we happily succeed in carrying a full and complete emancipation of our own slaves. I am aware that my views would appear to many so utopian that I should not, I believe, have ventured to mention them even to thee had I not found that thy own extended nearly as far, and that I know the All-wise Disposer of events often makes use of the weakest instrument to promote the accomplishment of some of His most important designs. The wonderful advance which this cause has made in our own country also justifies the belief that the cry of this poor oppressed people has indeed ‘gone up to God,’ and that He wills their deliverance from their cruel bondage, not only within the British dominions, but throughout the whole world. Some of my ideas, so far as they have assumed a tangible shape, are these: That a Society should be at once formed for the abolition of slavery throughout the world, and that endeavours should be made at the ensuing Yearly Meeting so far to throw the burden upon it as to get the appointment of a standing committee, to adopt the means of uniting with other sections of the Christian public in a general effort to promote this great object, at the time when the example of England is exciting the attention of the civilised world.

The effect of this example throughout the American continent will no doubt be great; but whether it effects the general emancipation of the slaves there peaceably, or through a dreadful servile war, will, under Providence, I think, greatly depend upon the proper discharge of the duty which the religious public in this country owes to those who are rightly concerned on the other side of the Atlantic, and their using every effort to induce the abolitionists there to advocate their cause on *sound and just principles*. . . . Happily, our members in this country now generally entertain correct views on this subject (and the importance of this can only be fully appreciated by those who have known the evils of the contrary); the public still, I believe, in a considerable degree, look to them as leaders in the cause, and perhaps they never were in a position for exerting their influence in it more beneficially, so that there is thrown upon them an additional responsibility to do their duty. Let us, therefore, form a general crusade against this accursed system throughout the civilised world.'

In this letter he mentions also some of the means which he proposed to employ to carry the object into effect. And it is sufficiently note-worthy that among them are missions to the West Indies and to America.

But whatever thoughts of this nature had engaged his attention at that early period, it no doubt soon became evident to him that their accomplishment must be postponed until the battle, which proved far more obstinate and prolonged than he then expected, should have been fought out in our own country. For how could we become propagandists of freedom until we had cleared ourselves of all share in the guilt of slavery? But now that we had finally wiped away that reproach his mind again reverted to his early Utopia of 'a general crusade against the accursed system.'

His first step was to call a preliminary and unofficial

conference of the friends of the slave, at which it was resolved to summon a meeting of delegates at Exeter Hall on April 17 and 18, 1839, to consider the necessity of some combined and organised effort for the promotion of the cause. This meeting accordingly took place at the appointed time, and issued in the establishment of 'The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society,' which is still in active operation. The fundamental principles of the Association were embodied in the following resolution:—

'That so long as slavery exists there is no reasonable prospect of the annihilation of the slave trade, and of extinguishing the sale and barter of human beings: That the extinction of slavery and the slave trade will be attained most effectually by the employment of those means which are of a moral, religious, and pacific character; and that no measures be resorted to by this Society, in the prosecution of those objects, but such as are in entire accordance with these principles.'

As some of those present at the meeting were disposed to favour the attempt to put down the slave-trade by the employment of armed cruisers on the coast of Africa, there was considerable difficulty in bringing them to accede to the latter part of this resolution. But on that point Mr. Sturge was immovable. Besides his strong conviction that the attempt to put down the traffic by mere external coercion, while slavery itself existed and offered such abundant temptation to the cupidity of reckless and unprincipled men, would be entirely useless, and perhaps worse than useless, by aggravating the horrors without materially diminishing the extent of the trade; his Christian conscience revolted from the idea of trying to promote philanthropic ends by violence and blood. In a letter to his friend

and relative, Mr. John Cropper of Liverpool, he thus adverts to the stand he had made on this question :

'London : Fourth month, 18, 1839.

'MY DEAR BROTHER,--I thought you and William Bevan would like to have early information as to the result of our meeting, which was adjourned yesterday, but closed to-day. Dr. Lushington, Sir G. Strickland, &c., took a very active part, and, therefore, thou mayst suppose we had rather a hard struggle to maintain our peace principle. At one time during the discussion I distinctly stated that, unless it was laid down as a fundamental principle that the society would not sanction a resort to arms, I could not be a member of it. At length Dr. Lushington, who behaved in the most handsome manner, consented to, indeed, prepared a resolution which, I think, has quite secured our point, and which, at length, passed unanimously. Dr. Lushington and T. F. Buxton are members of the new committee. We mean to issue an extra "Emancipator" next week, to give our account of the proceedings, which, of course, you will receive.'

In a similar strain he writes from London to Mr. Thomas Harvey of Leeds on the 23rd of the same month :

'I am glad the discussion here allowed me a proper opportunity of avowing my belief, not only of the inconsistency of the means hitherto pursued with Christian principle, but of the increased suffering inflicted upon Africa by them.'

As a further illustration of the extreme importance which Mr Sturge attached to this point, and how sensitively he shrank from the idea of pressing the use of carnal weapons into the service of the Anti-slavery cause, we may cite a few extracts from letters he wrote about the same time, to his friend Mr. Lewis Tappan of New York, a man of kindred spirit, whose name occupies a foremost place on the roll of American philanthropy.

Under date of October 2, 1840, he writes ;—

'I alluded in my last to the only point on which there is

likely to be any difficulty to obstruct an entire co-operation between your American and Foreign Anti-slavery Society and ours. I mean the full recognition of the peace principle. I have been talking this matter over with some influential members of my own (Quakers) society, who are also warm supporters of our Anti-slavery cause, and are very desirous of doing what they can to influence the orthodox Friends of America to join your new organisation, if they can do so without any compromise of principle. Our friends *here* are not very sanguine of getting them to join you generally, but have suggested that I should ask thee if thou thought your committee would be willing so far to meet their views as to adopt the practice fallen in with at our late Convention: of a pause of silence, instead of any formal prayer; and if further your Society would adopt the peace principle in accordance with the circular first issued by the committee to invite the attendance of delegates. This is a *sine quâ non* with "Friends," who are thought quite consistent on this side of the water, in urging it; and it is a point to which I individually attach very great importance, both as a matter of principle and as affecting the ultimate success of our efforts.'

In a subsequent letter to the same friend he says:—

'I rejoice to find thou and I so much unite on the peace principle, and with the views thou says thou thinks are held by some of your committee, I almost dread the consequence of your coming to any resolution upon it at present. But I hope thou wilt have sufficient influence to prevent their coming to any decision that would at all lower your standard in this respect, or get the decision postponed till we can have a free and full communication on the subject. When our friends, Birney, Stanton, return, I hope to be able to communicate more fully upon this *vital* point. It is becoming of more and more importance.'

In one of the passages just cited there is an allusion to a 'late convention.' This refers to the great Anti-slavery Convention held in London in June 1840. When

the British and Foreign Anti-slavery Society had been fully organised, Mr. Sturge became anxious that it should adopt some means of bringing the sacred cause committed to its charge before the attention of the world in all its relations and bearings. To this end it was determined to convoke what was called a 'world's convention.' Early in 1840 the committee of the new association issued an invitation to the friends of freedom and humanity in all countries of Christendom 'to a general conference in London,' as this document expresses it, 'in order to deliberate on the best means of promoting the interests of the slave; of obtaining his immediate and unconditional freedom, and by every pacific measure to hasten the utter extinction of the slave-trade. To this conference they earnestly invite the friends of the slave of every nation and of every clime.'

But it may be readily imagined that to ensure the success of such a project, much more was necessary than the issuing of circulars, however earnest and importunate. Nothing but the living fire of intense personal zeal and devotion could suffice to kindle in the hearts of others an interest strong enough to induce the exertions and sacrifices required for the occasion. And indeed, the activity of mind and body which Mr. Sturge put forth at this time in order to render the anticipated meeting effective, was truly marvellous. How bold and comprehensive were the plans he had formed, may be seen from the following memorandum which he drew up in June, 1839 :—

'It is suggested, that if it be practicable, visits be paid to the different countries in Europe, interested or implicated in the slave-trade and slavery, and also to the American continent and adjacent islands where slavery exists. To effect this, probably not less than three separate deputations

will be needful. One should visit Denmark, France, Spain, and Portugal; one the Brazils, and one go, *viâ* America, to Cuba, Porto Rico, Martinique, Gaudaloupe, and Santa Cruz. The objects of this visit should be to obtain accurate information, if possible, upon all points contained in the queries we may resolve to append to the foreign circular; to promote the formation of anti-slavery associations where they do not exist already, and especially to secure the appointment of suitable persons to attend the conference to be held in London next year. Those who undertake such a mission should do so at such time, as will enable them to return to England early in the fifth month next year.'

In sending this memorandum to his friend Mr. G. W. Alexander, Mr. Sturge writes, June 25, 1839:—

'I annex a sketch of what I think ought to be done if we would make the conference next year as successful as human exertion can, under the Divine blessing, help it to be. With regard to myself I am willing to take any part which on mature reflection it may be thought would most serve the cause; and to appropriate, if needful, 1000*l.* for the expense of a journey. I thought that William Forster and some other anti-slavery friends might go to the Continent, and if thou and thy wife, on fully considering it, should see it right for thee to go to the Brazils, and if it should appear best for me to go to America, Cuba, &c., we might so arrange it that we could meet in Jamaica, and after spending a few weeks there return, *viâ* New York, together to England. Were I to go to America, I should urge our friends there to send a deputation to explore the condition of slavery and the slave-trade in their own Southern States, while I went to Cuba and the other slave-holding islands. Thou wilt please to consider what I say about my willingness to go as quite confidential, as much harm sometimes arises from matters getting talked of, especially if they are not carried into execution.'

But as circumstances arose which rendered it impossible for Mr. Sturge to quit England at that time, he

laboured hard to find a substitute for the proposed journey to Cuba. In a letter to Mr. Lewis Tappan in September 1839, referring to a gentleman who had been mentioned as suitable for such a mission, he writes : —

‘ My proposition is this: that if thou and a few others of our most judicious anti-slavery friends, should, after an interview in strict confidence, think him a well-qualified person for the mission and he is willing to undertake it, get him to go privately to Cuba, and obtain all the information he possibly can as to the nature and extent of slavery there, the condition of the liberated Africans, &c. &c. If possible, we should also obtain the names and get into personal communication with such persons as are sound abolitionists, and who, if they dare not form themselves into an association on the spot, might devise some means by which we or you might correspond with them ; and, if it is any way practicable, get one or more of this character to represent Cuba at our convention in London in 1840. Having completed his visit to Cuba, I would then suggest that he should go from there to Texas, and collect the names of the anti-slavery party he speaks of, and if possible, get one of them to join him as their representative to the convention. If this party in Texas, is sufficiently strong to avow publicly their willingness to make every man free who touches their soil, provided the abolitionists will join in a friendly negotiation to induce the Mexican Government and European States to recognise their independence, it would be a great point indeed gained. But if they were not prepared for this public avowal, it would be desirable for S. P. Andrews and any one who might accompany him to get to London in sufficient time next spring to advise us what other course to pursue. Should this plan be approved by you, I authorise thee to hold me responsible for an amount which you may consider a reasonable expense of his journey, economically conducted.

‘ Very sincerely thy affectionate friend,

‘ JOSEPH STURGE.’

Though it was found impracticable to carry into effect the whole of Mr. Sturge's comprehensive programme prior to the meeting of the convention, it was never relinquished, and ultimately all the countries mentioned by him were visited for anti-slavery purposes. But while these extensive operations abroad were kept in view, no time was lost in adopting such organisation at home as would secure that the United Kingdom, at least, should be well represented at the coming convention. Under date of July 7, 1839, Mr. Sturge writes again to Mr. Alexander, as follows :—

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—Since we parted I have been thinking much of our country organisation of new Anti-slavery Societies, and I believe it would be a very great inducement to our friends, in America and elsewhere, to come to the meeting next year, if they *knew* they should be met by a numerous body of their English friends. Therefore, if we could get a hundred places or upwards in the United Kingdom to pledge themselves in the first instance to send delegates to such a meeting, it would be a great point gained. I had written thus far when thine of yesterday came to hand, and, on considering its contents, it has not altered my opinion of the propriety of the decision we came to on Third-day to secure a certain amount of support in this country as soon as we can. This will mainly depend upon thee and me, and I venture to suggest, on the other side, our respective districts. The points which should be recognised in the formation of these societies are the recognition of our principles, objects, and means; the circulation of information, especially by our proposed new periodical; the aiding of our funds, and that each society should at once pledge itself to send one or more delegates to the Conference in 1840. I confess I am rather afraid of thy having — with thee in the formation of the society at Brighton, he is so lax on our peace views. I am more and more of opinion that we gave way too much on the point at Exeter Hall, and that we must unequivocally avow our prin-

ciple at the formation of all our auxiliaries. My want of a knowledge of foreign languages is a great bar to my being of any use on a continental visit, and I do not like to lose thy home labours for the next two months. Try and persuade William Allen to go to Denmark and Sweden, if we can find him a companion. I fear William Forster will not go to France, but I am not without hopes that Captain Moorsom may. I spoke to him about it last night. I go to Gloucester on Second-day, and mean to make a beginning there and at Stroud. It does not follow that all the counties named on the other side should be visited. . . .'

On the other side of this sheet is the arrangements of districts referred to for Mr. Alexander and himself. Mr. Alexander was to take Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, &c., indeed all the southern and western counties, together with South Wales, Cork, and Waterford. Mr. Sturge himself to take the midland and northern counties, together with North Wales, Dublin, Belfast, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. A few days later he reports to the same correspondent that he had commenced operations in his own district under favourable auspices. 'I thought,' he says, 'thou would be pleased to hear that I have this week met the Anti-slavery committees, and some other of our friends, at Stroud, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, and Worcester, and that they have not only in all these places fully and unanimously approved of the principles upon which our new Society is based, and resolved to form auxiliaries to it, but have, with equal unanimity, approved of the general conference in London next year, and agreed to send one or more deputies to attend.' And through the following months we can trace the same incessant activity, moving from place to place, rallying and organising the friends of freedom for the great demon-

stration that was at hand, and by the singular force and fascination of his character, seldom failing to inoculate those with whom he came into contact with a portion of his own enthusiasm. Meanwhile he was keeping up an earnest correspondence with the leading abolitionists of America, with a view to secure a good representation from that country at the convention. The result of all this care and labour was, that a very generous response to the invitation of the committee was received, not only from all parts of the United Kingdom, but from the British colonies, the continent of Europe, and the United States. The first meeting of the conference was held at Freemason's Hall, on Friday, June 12, 1840. The members began to assemble before ten o'clock, and by eleven o'clock the spacious hall was filled with a body of between 500 and 600 delegates, together with a large number of visitors.

It was, indeed, a remarkable assembly. Those whose eyes are dazzled only by the glitter of rank, and fashion, and worldly fame, might find little there to attract their attention or command their esteem; but no man whose heart could be touched with sympathy for the wrongs of the oppressed, or with admiration for that noblest kind of heroism which seeks its reward in the triumphs of humanity and mercy, could glance along those thronging benches, without an emotion of singular interest and respect. For there was gathered no unworthy representation of 'the pledged philanthropy of earth.' There might be seen the veteran champions of the cause of the slave in the British Parliament, Buxton, and Lushington, and O'Connell, and Villiers, the great name of Brougham only being wanting, his shattered health having obliged him to be content with only sending words of cordial greeting to his old allies, by

letter. There were also the men who, by their varied and vigorous eloquence, had evoked and organised the public sentiment out of doors, which had clothed their parliamentary leaders with such resistless power before the legislature; men like John Burnet, and George Thompson, and John Scoble, and Samuel Bowly, and a score besides, hardly less worthy of mention, who had carried into every corner of the kingdom the sacred fire which had burst at length into such a blaze as to have illuminated the whole land.

There, likewise, were a 'faithful few among the faithless found' of the literary men of our country—for, unhappily, it must be confessed that the cause of emancipation in England has owed little to the influence of the fourth estate—in the persons of Thomas Campbell, and John Bowring, and Josiah Conder, and Colonel Thompson. The West Indies had sent William Knibb, and John Clark, and others, to represent the noble band of missionaries who had so long and bravely battled with the monster slavery on its own soil. From the United States had come some of the chosen men in that little gallant army of abolitionists who, amid infinite obloquy and scorn, were lifting up a banner in the name of the Lord, for righteousness and freedom in their own land; among whom were Birney and Stanton, Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips, and 'of honourable women not a few.' France had sent a considerable delegation, headed by the respected names of Isambert and Cremieux, who had already distinguished themselves in the senate and at the bar as the friends of the persecuted and oppressed. While scattered throughout the room might be seen scores and hundreds of the men and women, who, in all parts of the country, through evil report and good report, had, by their

counsels, and efforts, and unsparing liberality, sustained the cause of those that were ready to perish, the large majority consisting of the members of that Society whose noblest distinction it is to have ever been the foremost apostles of freedom and philanthropy.

Over this assembly presided the venerable Thomas Clarkson, his body bent beneath the burden of more than eighty years, but his heart beating as warmly as ever for the cause of the enslaved; while Joseph Sturge was felt by all to be the animating spirit of the scene, to whose influence and energy it was owing, in a main degree, that this large body of delegates had been brought together, whose ardent zeal pervaded every part of the proceedings, and whose gentle and generous temper did much to blend all elements into harmony.

The opening scene of the convention was one of the most solemn and thrilling ever witnessed in a public assembly. It has been described by Haydon, the painter, in language at once so picturesque and pathetic, that we cannot do better than borrow his words. He had been asked to attend professionally, to see whether such an assemblage might not be a fit subject for an historical picture. He had gone, as he acknowledges, reluctantly enough, with a little, probably, of that half-contemptuous feeling, with which men of his class too often look from a distance upon benevolent enterprises of this nature.

‘On entering the meeting,’ he says, ‘at the time appointed, I saw at once I was in the midst of no common assembly. The venerable and benevolent heads which surrounded me, soon convinced me that materials existed of character and expression in the members present, provided any one moment of pictorial interest should occur. In a few minutes an unaffected man got up, and

informed the meeting that Thomas Clarkson would attend shortly ; he begged no tumultuous applause might greet his entrance, as his infirmities were great, and he was too nervous to bear, without risk of injury to his health, any such expressions of their good feeling towards him. The Friend who addressed them was Joseph Sturge, a man whose whole life has been devoted to ameliorate the condition of the unhappy.

‘In a few minutes the aged Clarkson came in, grey and bent, leaning on Joseph Sturge for support, and approached with feeble and tottering steps the middle of the convention. I had never seen him before, nor had most of the foreigners present : and the anxiety to look on him betrayed by all, was exceedingly unaffected and sincere. Immediately behind Thomas Clarkson were his daughter-in-law, the widow of his son, and his little grandson.

‘Aided by Joseph Sturge and his daughter, Clarkson mounted to the chair, sat down in it as if to rest, and then in a tender feeble voice, appealed to the assembly for a few minutes’ meditation before he opened the convention. The venerable old man put his hand simply to his forehead, as if in prayer, and the whole assembly followed his example ; for a minute there was the most intense silence I ever felt. Having inwardly uttered a short prayer, he was again helped up ; and bending forward, leaning on the table, he spoke to the great assembly as a patriarch standing near the grave, or as a kind father who felt an interest for his children. Every word he uttered was from his heart—he spoke tenderly, tremulously ; and, in alluding to Wilberforce, acknowledged, just as an aged man would acknowledge, his decay of memory in forgetting many other dear friends whom he could not then recollect. After solemnly

urging the members to persevere to the last, till slavery was extinct, lifting his arm and pointing to heaven (his face quivering with emotion), he ended by saying: "May the Supreme Ruler of all human events, at whose disposal are, not only the hearts, but the intellects, of men—may He, in His abundant mercy, guide your councils and give His blessing upon your labours." There was a pause of a moment, and then, without an interchange of thought or even of look, the whole of this vast meeting, men and women, said, in a tone of subdued and deep feeling, "AMEN! AMEN!"

'To the reader not present it is scarcely possible to convey, without affectation, the effect on the imagination of one who, like myself, had never attended benevolent meetings, had no notion of such deep sincerity in any body of men, or of the awful and unaffected piety of the class I had been brought amongst. That deep-toned AMEN came on my mind like the knell of a departing curse; I looked about me on the simple and extraordinary people, ever ready with their purse and their person, for the accomplishment of their great object; and if ever sound was an echo to the sense, or if ever deep and undaunted meaning was conveyed to the depths of the soul by sound alone, the death-warrant of slavery all over the earth was boded by that AMEN!

'I have seen the most afflicting tragedies, imitative and real; but never did I witness in life or in the drama, so deep, so touching, so pathetic an effect produced on any great assembly as by the few unaffected, unsophisticated words of this aged and agitated person.

'The women wept, the men shook off their tears, unable to prevent their flowing; for myself, I was so affected and astonished that it was many minutes before I recovered sufficiently to perceive the moment of

interest I had longed for had come to pass—and this was the moment I immediately chose for the picture.'

There never, certainly, was an occasion on which the subject of slavery in every part of the world, and in all its aspects, relations, and influences, was brought before the public in so complete and comprehensive a manner as at this conference. Nor can it be doubted that it was the means of imparting a new impulse to the cause of emancipation throughout the civilised world.

CHAPTER XI.

VISIT TO AMERICA.

Relations of the Society of Friends to the Anti-Slavery Question in America — Their early exertions against Slavery: John Woolman and Anthony Benezet — Change in their feelings and conduct — J. G. Whittier — Letter from him — Mr. Sturge's letter to him — Letters from Dr. Wardlaw — Mr. Cobden and Thomas Clarkson on his departure to America — Dreadful storm in going out — Letters to his sister — New York — Philadelphia — Yearly Meeting of Friends there — Feeling respecting the Anti-Slavery Movement — Baltimore — Visits a Slave-trading Establishment — The Baptist Triennial Convention — Wilmington — America and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society — Runaway Slaves — Albany — Interview with Governor Seward — Feeling among Friends respecting the Slavery Question — Visits Dr. Channing — At Providence — Addresses a letter to the owner of the Slave-trading Establishment — Memorial to the President refused — Mr. Sturge publishes it — His supposed influence on the debates at Washington — Tries to heal divisions among Abolitionists — Effects of his visit to America — Letters from L. Tappan and J. G. Whittier — His own estimate of its effects — Letter to T. Harvey.

No sooner was the conference over, and the various practical matters arising out of it in a fair way of being carried into effect, than Mr. Sturge began to consider in what direction his services would be farther useful, in the same cause. From one of his letters already cited, it appears that in the early part of 1839 he contemplated a visit to the Brazils, to enquire into the operations of the slave system there. But such was the disturbed condition of our own country, and especially of the town of Birmingham, at the time, that he felt it his duty to relinquish the project :

'I am sorry,' he says in a letter to Mr. Tappan under date of July 31, 1839, 'for the difficulty there appears to be in any two men visiting the Brazils and your Southern States. When I wrote thee I had some thought of going to the former, but duties of a very pressing nature are likely to keep me at home, I believe, for the next twelve months. The state of our town has been alarming, and our peace principles are likely to be brought closely to the test. I should not, I think, consider myself in any personal danger if I went to the Brazils, and if I were, I trust I should not be deterred from going by the fear of it, if I saw it my place, and felt it my duty to go. Indeed, so much has been said about the martyrdom of abolitionists, and so very few have been a sacrifice to their principles, that I think the danger is supposed to be much greater than it is, if the party who went acted judiciously.'

Mr. Sturge, however, felt that the stronghold of slavery was in the United States, and he had for some time entertained the idea of visiting that country, especially on a mission to the members of his own Society. In the earlier history of the anti-slavery movement in America, the Friends had taken a very prominent part. Its origin, indeed, may be ascribed to the labours of two admirable men belonging to that body, John Woolman and Anthony Benezet, who, long before the public conscience had awoke in this country to a sense of the sinfulness of slavery, had perceived and proclaimed that truth with an apostolic boldness and fervour that produced a great impression, not only within their own religious circle, but on public sentiment generally in many of the States.

It was under the impulse which they had created that the first anti-slavery societies were established about the period of the American Revolution, with which Judge Jay, Benjamin Franklin, Dr. Rush, and other

distinguished statesmen associated themselves, though they were mainly composed of members of the Society of Friends. But it would appear that, more recently, a different course had been generally adopted by the Society. Partly from the notion that religious men must not meddle with politics, partly from a too fastidious apprehension of compromising their own peculiarities by cooperation with Christians of other denominations, and partly also, it may be feared, from a decline in the earnestness and moral courage which had distinguished their predecessors, the Friends in America had, for many years, taken very little active part in the Anti-slavery agitation. They had, indeed, cleared themselves of all direct participation in and complicity with the evil thing, having adopted as a rule of discipline the exclusion of slave-holders from religious fellowship, and they had, moreover, from time to time formally uttered their 'testimony' against it. But beyond that they did not care to go. Instead of being, as their brethren in this country ever have been, the most active promoters of the movement for freedom, they, for the most part, held aloof, and did not decidedly come forth 'to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' This was a matter of deep lamentation to Mr. Sturge, and he determined to go among them, in the hope of doing something to engage them in more active interest on behalf of the cause that was so dear to his heart. Combined with this there were, also, other objects, especially that of international peace, which he hoped to subserve by visiting America. Among the Friends in that country there were a few like-minded with himself on the subject of slavery, who felt there was a call upon them in the name of justice and humanity, before which all sectarian pruderies ought to give place, to

join with earnest men of every creed, who were willing to labour for the simple object of putting away the great abomination which was the curse and calamity of the land. Among these stood conspicuous the name of John Greenleaf Whittier, now known through the world as the poet laureate of freedom and philanthropy, whose animating strains had from the first roused and cheered on the small band of brave men who then constituted the forlorn hope of abolitionism in the United States. The following letter from Mr. Whittier to Mr. Sturge, though written at a considerably later date, may be fitly introduced here, as giving us a glimpse into the state of feeling which prevailed in the religious society to which he belonged, and the embarrassing position which he and the few other thorough-going abolitionists occupied in that body:—

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—I was truly glad to receive thy letter by the last steamer, and am especially obliged to thee for the statement of the substance of thy remarks in your Yearly Meeting. I freely acknowledge that the few of us who feel deeply on the subject in our Society here, have sensibly sustained a loss by neglecting to speak the fitting word which at times has pressed for utterance in our meetings. Most of us belong to the younger class of members, and we have felt it a hard thing to stand up against the weight and influence of ministers and elders. When the decision was taken in our Yearly Meeting, shutting up our Meeting-houses against the friends of the slave, three or four of us who felt constrained to stand up and dissent from the body, were subjected to the charge of insubordination, and considered “out of the unity.” For myself, I may as well admit to thee, knowing as thou dost the state of things among us, that I do not look to our Society for any official action, in its Society capacity, against slavery. If, within the last ten years, anything has been done for the cause of freedom in this country, our Society cannot

claim any credit for it. God, in His all-wise Providence, has raised up *other* instrumentalities to do His work. As a Friend—as a sectarian—I sometimes regret this, but as a friend of suffering humanity, I rejoice that wider and more powerful influences than any which could proceed from our Society, have been put in operation against the great sin of my country. My heart opens to every friend of the slave, irrespective of his sect or his creed. The anti-slavery cause has not, I trust, made me less a Quaker, but it has given me a more enlarged charity, a deeper sense of the universal brotherhood, and an entire willingness to labour in whatever way Providence may open, and with whatever companionship it may afford me for the promotion of the well-being of my fellow-men. This cause has been to me what the vision on the house-top of Cornelius was to Peter—it has destroyed all narrow sectarian prejudices, and made me willing to be *a man among men.*'

Though, prior to his visit to America, Mr. Sturge had no personal acquaintance with Mr. Whittier, yet, knowing well his sentiments and sympathies, he wrote to that gentleman, explaining with characteristic modesty the design he cherished, and inviting his cooperation.

'DEAR FRIEND,—Though we are personally unknown to each other, I am about to open my mind to thee as to a very old and intimate friend. I am seriously intending to pay a private visit to America for a few weeks or perhaps months, principally with the following objects :—To promote an entire unity of action and cooperation between the *British* and *Foreign* Anti-Slavery Society, and the *American* and *Foreign* Anti-Slavery Society, including *all* that will act upon our principles and not mix up other matters with it.

'To ascertain the feeling and judgment of our American Friends as to the propriety of holding any future conventions; and, if they are in favour of it, when and where the next should be held.

'To see, *privately*, if there are any means of removing the objections which have hitherto prevented our American

Friends from taking part in the movements of anti-slavery societies, provided they are both, in theory and *practice*, kept entirely distinct from all other matters.

'Apart and distinct from the anti-slavery objects, I mean also to take the opportunity of ascertaining, as I go along, what elements there are in America for holding at a future period a conference of nations for the promotion of permanent and universal peace. My intention is to avoid altogether appearing, and especially speaking, in public (for which latter I am quite unqualified, if there was no other objection), but to visit in private parties the persons who may most be depended upon for properly working our cause. The earliest time I look to for leaving England is by the British Queen, on the 10th of next month; and, if I go at all, which is yet very uncertain, I may not go till near a month later. Now, thou wilt see that on such an expedition I shall want a companion uniting with my views, with a pretty general knowledge of the individual character and standing both of the abolitionists and the members of the Society of Friends in your land; and I wish to ask thee to be kind enough to be that companion, of course allowing me to pay every kind of expense, &c. &c., to which such a journey might subject thee. At all events, allow me to press upon thee that in the event of my writing thee by the next Boston steam-packet, to say I am coming by the British Queen, thou wilt be kind enough to be in New York to meet me to give me thy advice and counsel, and if our friends there should unite in opinion that it will be desirable for thee to accompany me, thou wilt feel it a duty from which thou canst not feel excused. I am aware that thy health may appear to thee to be a sufficient objection, and if it is, this is a point upon which I cannot of course say a word to urge thee beyond thy strength; but I am not without hopes that the journey might be of service to thee in this respect.

'Thine respectfully,

'JOSEPH STURGE.

'Birmingham: 2-9, 1841.'

Mr. Sturge's intention of going to America was very little known. It could not, however, be concealed from those who were associated with him in public work, many of whom sent him cordial greetings on his departure. Rev. Dr. Wardlaw wrote :—'I wish you, my honoured friend, a safe and prosperous expedition under the care of that kind Providence without which "a sparrow falleth not to the ground," and of that Divine Redeemer whose special commission it was to "preach deliverance to the captives," "to set at liberty them that are bound," "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Oh that he may speedily break every yoke both of spiritual and secular oppression.'

Mr. Cobden, however, who was bearing the heat and burden of the Free Trade agitation, and knew the value to the cause in which he was engaged of Mr. Sturge's high character and steadfast principles, grudged the absence of his friend from England at such a moment :—

'Could I have seen you (he says), I should have endeavoured to dissuade you from leaving us; but your decision is, I have no doubt, come to after a due consideration of what you believe to be your duty, and with a full regard to the best interests of humanity. I do, however, see in the present state of things in this country much to create alarm in patriotic minds. . . . When you are in America you will be able to take a dispassionate glance at our condition at home, and I hope you will return with a determination to throw all the weight of your talents and moral influence into the scale of the poor and oppressed millions of your countrymen. Your letter will be of infinite use to us at the present juncture; it is worthy of you.* We shall publish it in the next circular. With my most ardent wishes for your health and happiness, believe me,

'Very truly yours,
'RICHARD COBDEN.'

* This is explained further on.

But it must have been specially gratifying to Mr. Sturge to receive on the eve of his departure for America the following letter of counsel and encouragement from the venerable patriarch of abolitionism in England:—

‘Playford Hall: March 5, 1841.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—Though I feel very sorry for your departure to a distant land, yet I can conceive how it may have come into your mind *in the shape of a duty*, as at the head of our great cause here, to know of yourself, and personally, how things are now going on in the United States concerning it without trusting to others. I am sure that such knowledge will be most useful to you in your future management of our cause.

‘It strikes me that if I were going to America in the same situation with yourself, at the head of the Anti-slavery society in England, that I should try to know the *general disposition* of the Americans to the cause, and the different opinions respecting the *practicability* of the abolition of slavery, and what are likely to be the obstacles to it. Also into what parties, and particularly leading parties, the Union is divided on this subject, and the bearings of each and their influences on this great question. Also the number of Anti-slavery committees, their separate constitutions, their present disposition and temper, and in what they differ from each other, previously to an attempt, and with the view of an attempt to reconcile them and bring them into one, so that they should adopt the same principles and measures. I should endeavour, further, to instil into these committees *as a vital principle*, the necessity of not mixing other subjects with ours. This cause is a pure and holy cause, and must be kept unspotted as far as it is possible. There must be no commixture with it, and they should abstain from all political as well as fanatic excitements. . . . I do not see what else I have to offer to your consideration, for I am clear that you must be guided by what you see and learn in America. You must be on the watch and take advantage of incidents as they occur, and who

knows but under Providence such incidents may arise as shall direct your proceedings the right way. It appears to me that you may gain a great deal by seeing Dr. Channing. I am much pleased with his work, and I wish I could see him to thank him. He deprecates force, and has recourse only to just and moral means. I should be very much inclined to follow any advice he may give you in America.

‘I must desire you before you leave London to give my kind regards to the London committee, and tell them that I shall be desirous of executing their commands, and of giving them all the assistance in my power in the same manner while you are absent as if you were at home in England. They must not hesitate if I can be of any service to them to write to me immediately.

‘And now, my dear friend, I repeat that we are sorry that you are so soon going to leave us, but we must submit to this calamity from the belief that it will be more than counterbalanced by a great preponderance of good. I do really think that the Divine blessing will follow you, for I cannot conceive that you could be going on any errand more acceptable to God, than the attempt to remove an evil—the greatest physical and moral evil that ever afflicted the human race. My spirit will certainly be with you wherever you go.

‘Poor little Tommy! I cannot tell by what means you have made an impression on him, but the child is greatly affected at hearing of your departure, and he has nothing to counterbalance his sorrow, for he is not of an age to comprehend all the good you may do. I am, my dear friend, with an anxious and earnest desire for the preservation of your health and of yourself, and for success to our good cause,

‘Yours affectionately,

‘THOMAS CLARKSON.’

As Mr. Sturge, on his return from America, published a volume containing an account of his visit, it is not necessary that we should enter here into very minute

details. That work gives much valuable information, not only on the whole subject of slavery and the slave trade, together with the labours, sufferings, and schisms, of the abolitionists in the United States, but on the more general questions of peace and temperance, juvenile crime and prison discipline, the operation of the voluntary principle in religion and education, the condition of the Indian aboriginal tribes, and of course a good deal respecting the state of the Society of Friends in that country. We have, however, in our possession a series of letters he wrote to his sister during his absence, in which he enters more fully and freely upon various matters connected with the anti-slavery cause in America than it was thought expedient to make public at the time. Some of the revelations they contain, especially when read in the light of the awful events that have recently occurred, seem to us full of significance and instruction. They prove to what an extent religious principle had become palsied by contact with slavery even in that Society which was least under its influences, and how dangerous is the tendency to which all religious bodies are exposed of substituting zeal on behalf of the 'mint and anise and cummin' of sectarian forms for the weightier matters of the law, 'judgment, mercy, and faith.' He embarked at Portsmouth on board the British Queen steam packet on March 10, 1841. On the night of May 18, they encountered one of the most awful hurricanes ever witnessed by the oldest sailor on board, the same in all probability in which the unfortunate President, coming in the opposite direction, foundered, for she was never heard of more. 'From this date to the 24th,' he says, 'we experienced a succession of storms of indescribable violence and severity, which, at some intervals, caused

great and I believe very just alarm for the safety of the ship.'

'New York: April 9, 1841.

'We arrived at New York on the night of the 4th, and the next morning being the First day, I took breakfast on board and went at once to meeting. At the close, I left without speaking to any Friend, and went to Lewis Tappan's to dinner, and afterwards spent two or three hours with J. G. Whittier, whom I find all I could wish, for a companion. He is willing to accompany me as far as his health will permit, and we agree in sentiment, I believe, upon all material points. On third day we met rather a large party at a Friend's of the name of Shotwell, amongst the rest Mahlon Day, J. J. Gurney's companion to the West Indies. I did not feel much encouraged by this meeting, but J. G. Whittier thinks some good has been done. I have also seen the editors of two of the leading newspapers, one of them a brother-in-law of Dr. Wayland's and a good specimen of an American colonisationist and prejudice against colour. . . . Do not be uneasy about me, my dearest sister, for though I feel entirely unworthy of being the instrument in removing the smallest part of human suffering, I have not for a moment doubted, amidst the greatest apparent danger to which I have been exposed in crossing the ocean, the propriety of the step I have taken in coming here; and though as yet I hardly see how any good is to arise from it, I believe I can cheerfully leave the result to Him who orders all things well.'

'Philadelphia: April 12, 1841.

'MY DEAREST SISTER,—J. G. Whittier and I left New York early on 7th day morning, and came to Burlington, where I took up my quarters at Stephen Grellet's, who, with his wife, received me with the greatest kindness. I found him cordially with us, both in principle and on the propriety of uniting with others on the Abolition question, as Friends do in England. This also appears to be the case with an excellent and venerable friend of the name of John Cox, of

the age of eighty-seven, whom we went out to drink tea with, and who, I understand, sits at the head of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. There is, however, such a powerful body against uniting with others, or, indeed, taking any active part in the Abolition cause, that I fear very little progress will be made in this Yearly Meeting. For I found that Stephen Grellet considered, that if he publicly joined the abolitionists of other religious denominations, it must be at the expense of his influence with the Society, and this of course I could not urge upon him I think I shall better understand the position of the Anti-slavery cause, as regards Friends and others, by coming to this country, which will be of advantage.'

'Philadelphia: April 25, 1841.

'The Yearly Meeting lasted from 2nd day morning to 6th day afternoon, and I attended the whole except the last, at which no business remained to be transacted. In some respects the arrangements for conducting the business are better than ours, and it is certainly carried forward with more despatch; but there is still less freedom of remark among the young and middle-aged members than with us. The attendance on the men's side the first two or three days was, I think, about equal to the average of our Yearly Meeting in London, and at the latter sittings, certainly considerably more. I am informed that the women's meeting is still larger. The general tenor of the queries is much the same as ours, but there is one relating to spirituous liquors, on which a report is sent up from all the Quarterly Meetings, as to the number of members who used them, or offered them to others. The number reported was I think fifty-nine, and there was some discussion as to whether the rule of discipline should be tightened, so as to end in disownment, which I understand is the case in some other Yearly Meetings. It was, however, concluded to let it remain unaltered for the present, and further labour was recommended. The number of children of an age for education through the whole Yearly Meeting is reported. I think it was between 1,800, and 1,900, and

those attending no school between 50 and 100. There was a report of the committee in reference to the Indians, which contained a very affecting letter from their chiefs, showing their great grief at their forcible removal from the West. Friends seem doing their best on this subject, but apparently with very little practical effect upon the Government. There was a very good and plain minute from the London Yearly Meeting, to the Meeting of Sufferings, here read in the meeting at large. This, and the reading of an epistle on the Anti-slavery question, which was adopted by the Yearly Meeting last year, produced a considerable effect, and no Friend attempted to object to a proposition that was made to have it printed for general circulation among the members of the Yearly Meeting. I have had several private opportunities of discussing the relative course of Friends here and in England, once in the presence of two or three hundred Friends at the close of the Yearly Meeting (though with some opposition in certain quarters), who met to hear a statement of the results of emancipation in the West Indies from John Candler, who, with his wife, arrived after the Yearly Meeting had commenced. I was called upon to say a few words, and I briefly alluded to the principles and objects of the British and Foreign Anti-slavery Society. I have thought it best to avoid anything of a public nature, as I have found some Friends here, who stand high in the Society, that are favourable to our cause in England, and through them I am likely to get a private meeting at the house of T. Wister, when I expect to meet some of those who I consider are prejudiced on the other side. Some of the oldest and most valued Friends here in the Yearly Meeting, who stand high in the Society, such as S. Grellet, John Cox, and Thomas Wister, are quite favourable to the course adopted by English Friends, but they feel evidently in bondage to others, and at their time of life—all, I believe, upwards of eighty—I could not ask them to place themselves in a position so painful to their feelings, as in the present state of affairs here they must do, by joining Anti-slavery Societies.'

'New York: May 15, 1841.

'We arrived at Baltimore in the afternoon of the 28th of last month. While there I got admittance to one of the principal slave-trading establishments in that city, which was built in a public street within the last two or three years. The name of the owner is Hope H. Slaughter. I told him we were strangers, and having heard much of such establishments, we were desirous to see one with our own eyes. He immediately consented, and with the greatest apparent readiness. It was kept very clean, and the rooms, secured by strong iron doors, in which the negroes were usually locked up, are placed behind an open yard with high walls. Into this yard they are allowed to go in the daytime. There were not more than five or six slaves in the establishment at the time we were there. He said he had sent a batch off to New Orleans on the previous 7th day. After he had shown us over the premises, and whilst he had the door of his office locked upon us, he entered upon a curious defence of his trade, which showed, I think, some remaining signs of conscience. J. G. Whittier said he observed he would not look us in the face as he spoke. He did not attempt to controvert the position which I stated to him, that we held that slavery and the slave-trade were inconsistent with the Christian precept, "to do unto others as we would they should do unto us," but said he should be as ready as anyone to have the system abolished, if they were compensated for their property; that he was born in a slave state; that his mother had been a member of a Wesleyan church for fifty years, and that though he had not joined a Christian church himself, he had never sworn an oath, nor committed an immoral act in his life; that the negroes were better off when he sold them than they were in the hands of those of whom he purchased them, and that they not unfrequently came to him to ask him to purchase them; that he never parted families while they were in his possession; and altogether made out an unanswerable case, to show that the slave-dealer was not worse than the slaveholder. From this establishment we went at once to attend the Baptist

Triennial Convention. When we entered, our Anti-slavery friends in that body were asking some questions with a view to elicit whether the Southern delegates did not come pledged to vote off Elon Galusha* from the vice-presidency of the Missionary board, but the Southern men appeared confident of their strength, and bore cross-examination with more temper than they possibly would if they had had any fear of a defeat. But I confess I should have been puzzled to have decided which had the most conscience—the slave-dealer whom we had just left, or the supporters of slavery in this convention. To put a stop to discussion it was proposed that Fuller, a large slaveholding Baptist minister, and Elon Galusha, should pray, and after some further discussion it was carried. Galusha's prayer was a very appropriate one. They then went to the ballot, and to our surprise and gratification, though there were said to be between forty and fifty of those present from one slave State—I think South Carolina—and some of the free States were scarcely represented, Elon Galusha, was thrown off only by a majority of seven, the number in his favour being 117, and against 124; these might under the circumstances be considered a moral triumph. On our return in the afternoon, I understood (for we were not then present) that E. Galusha made such an admirable address that a number who voted against him expressed their regret. There were not a few, I understand, who came from the free States who voted against him.

‘At Baltimore we were told of a woman and child who had been sold the week before to the owner of the establishment we visited, and whose husband, a free man, had been ineffectually offering for years to bind himself to raise the money to redeem them; but being unable, his wife and child had been sent off, they said they had no doubt, with the lot going to New Orleans, and he would not in all probability see them again. These things are so common here as scarcely to excite sympathy, even with the best of the inhabitants. I

* An eminent and excellent minister of the Baptist body, who had given great offence to some of his brethren by his anti-slavery sentiments.

find, however, that the slave-dealer, though he keeps his carriage and lives in style, is rather shunned by the respectable inhabitants.

'At Wilmington there are some sincere abolitionists both among friends and the seceders, though I think they might abolish slavery in the State, which contains only about 5,000 slaves, if they would exert themselves. At the Baptist Anti-slavery Convention at New York they passed resolutions—of which I hope to forward a copy—one of which was a pledge to promote a good delegation to England in 1842 if a convention should be fixed; and the other unanimously affirming the resolutions of the London Convention with regard to church-fellowship. I returned to Philadelphia on the 6th. The party who have the control of the "Friend" paper would not even admit an advertisement of J. J. Gurney's letters, which Professor Cleveland is getting out in a newspaper shape.

'At New York I have attended this week the anniversary of the American and Foreign Anti-slavery Society, where I made a few remarks. Two meetings of business followed, at the last of which I entered a little into the question of a future convention, and there is a clause in the report confirming the resolution of the committee in favour of another being held in London in 1842. The movement in France and some other considerations lead me now to think the cause will suffer if it is not held then. There have likewise been some large and interesting meetings held to show the progress of the Amistad captives, at which about fifteen of them have been present, and though the admission was half a dollar each, crowds were present; upon the whole it is evident the feeling, especially in this city, is rapidly improving. I am told also there is a change for the better in Philadelphia, though there is, I believe, no city in the known world, whether slave or free, where the prejudice against colour is so strong as in this city of *brotherly love*.'

'New Bedford, West Chester: 5, 21.

'In the afternoon I started for Albany on the Light Boat with E. Galusha, J. Leavitt, and a friend of the name of

Shotwell, who is a good anti-slavery man, and with whom I have concluded to lodge at New York next week. When it was getting late at night I observed a black man and woman sitting on the lower deck, and, supposing they could not get accommodation on account of their colour, I went and spoke to them, telling them I was an abolitionist. This, and probably my dress, made them disclose that they had two days before escaped from slavery, and were on their road to Canada. The man lived at Washington, but his wife at Virginia, a few miles distant. They had obtained leave to go to a wedding on 7th day morning, and they were not expected home until 1st day night; and having obtained forged certificates of freedom, for which they had paid twenty-five dollars each, they had come by railroad and steamboat so rapidly that, though they had lost a day at New York, being fearful of making any enquiries there, yet we calculated no one could be up at Albany after them till the afternoon of the next day. Elon Galusha had a brother-in-law living about thirty miles from Albany out of the beaten track, with whom he thought they would be safe until pursuit was over, and having paid their fare for them in a conveyance in that direction, I do not think there is much danger of their being taken. Indeed, this is now so difficult that I believe the slave-owners seldom pursue them beyond Pennsylvania. They appeared well informed of the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies, and of the proceedings of abolitionists in the Northern States of the Union, and said that a number of their acquaintance would attempt to make their escape if they succeeded.'

'New York: 5, 15.

'I have been pressing our Friends to attend at Albany and canvass the members of the local Legislature of New York to grant the Elective Franchise to the people of colour and repeal one or two oppressive acts towards them, and I hope they have good prospect of success. I had an interview both with the Governor (W. H. Seward) and the Lieutenant Governor, from whom I had the most cordial reception; both avowed themselves in favour of wiping away all distinction

on account of colour. The late correspondence between the former and the Governor of Virginia on account of his refusal to give up some persons who had been accused of aiding runaway slaves to escape, thou hast probably heard in the reports. It had done great good to the anti-slavery cause and raised the Governor of New York high in the estimation of abolitionists. On my arrival at New York early in 4th day morn I proceeded at once to Hertford, Connecticut. In the evening I attended an open sitting of the Connecticut Legislature to hear some statements in support of a petition for equalising the privileges of the white and coloured citizens in the State. This was ably and forcibly done by two speakers (one a black man) at considerable length; there was a crowded attendance to hear them, and much interest manifested. I am not hopeful of so speedy a result in the state of New York.'

'June 29, 1841.

'I almost forget if I mentioned anything with regard to the Yearly Meeting at Newport which closed on 5th day the 17th inst. I am thankful I was present, that I might be able more clearly to realise the state of things. It is about as bad as the worst description we have had of it can make it as far as the leading influences of the society are concerned, but there is a very large portion who most decidedly sympathise with the ground we take in England, and yet these are so entirely silent in their meetings that a comparative few manage to have things entirely their own way. They referred a proposition from one of their own quarterly meetings, as well as the London Anti-slavery epistle, with scarcely any discussion, to a committee who are nominated, I believe, almost without exception from those who were against any Anti-slavery action. Indeed, in this meeting it is admitted that an active abolitionist is, by an understanding of the ruling influences, generally omitted on meeting appointments. The committee, of course, in their report recommended that the whole matter be referred to the Meeting for Sufferings. An epistle to England passed without remark, which contains a paragraph directly dis-

countenancing Friends joining Anti-slavery associations, while this and all the others have abundance of expressions of feeling and sympathy on the subject. I believe that I mentioned to thee that a similar application to the one granted at New York was not complied with here, but on a simple intimation that I would be at our Hotel on the 4th day evening, not less, I think, than 200 Friends came, and I made a similar, though more brief statement to the one I did at New York. I have had some rather plain talk with one or two of the leading Friends who are taking this, as it appears to me, very unsound ground. If I have anything to regret, I believe it is speaking rather too plainly and warmly upon the subject. I hope my visit will prevent matters getting worse amongst Friends, and their refusal to let us have the use of the meeting-house is, I think, likely ultimately to serve the cause. I am preparing a letter which I intend to publish and to circulate extensively before I leave. . . .

‘Dr. Channing was at a seat he has on Rhode Island, and we visited him one morning to breakfast with J. and M. Candler and S. Parsons, jun.; and once J. G. Whittier and I called upon him alone. I was much pleased with what I saw of him, and I believe his heart is very much in the Abolition cause. He suggested that a petition should be got up and generally signed from the Northern States praying that they might be relieved of all support of slavery. . . .

‘At Providence I was furnished by a solicitor with a copy of some most disgraceful laws on the State statute-book, in reference to slaves and people of colour, which I mean to send to the Meeting of Sufferings, and to tell them the opinion of some of the respectable inhabitants, that if *Friends* exert themselves these laws might be easily repealed. J. G. Whittier and myself went to New Bedford, where we spent 1st day the 20th. At the meeting was Jeremiah Hubbard, a Friend from Indiana, who is a Colonisationist, and opposed to the Abolition movement; and at the New York and Rhode Island Yearly Meetings, where he took an active part, his influence was, of course, against us. But in the morning

meeting he preached so much and so well against slavery, that had it come from a Friend who *acted* in the Abolition cause, it would, I have no doubt, have subjected him to private advice. In the evening there was a public meeting, at which J. Hubbard spoke at great length, and I was pleased to see that the coloured people were placed, with little or no distinction, among the other parts of the congregation. J. H. and I spoke mostly in reference to the Abolition question in other parts of the world, and avoided touching much upon what was likely to give uneasiness to cautious Friends; but I hope the meeting did some good.'

There surely is a lesson taught us by the facts disclosed in the above correspondence, which it would be culpable to overlook at such a moment as this. Is not the conviction forced upon us with a painful distinctness, that there has been a grievous lack of fidelity on the part of the various Christian bodies in America as respects 'the accursed thing' that was defiling their camp? Is it possible to resist the suggestion, that if they had only been faithful to duty and to God, they might long ago have stayed the moral pestilence which is now bringing so fearful a retribution upon the country? It had become almost a matter of boast among the respectable, and especially among the religious, portion of the community in the United States, that, shrinking with a sentimental delicacy from contact with such coarse elements, they had ceased to take any living active interest in political affairs. The Society of Friends particularly, as is obvious from the letters we have just cited, excused themselves from bearing part in the anti-slavery agitation, on the plea that secular politics were something common and unclean, which they could not touch without soiling their own purity. A vague sentiment of the same sort

pervades large classes of the religious community in our own country. But is not this practical asceticism utterly at variance with the whole spirit and intention of the Gospel? Have Christians, who are placed in the midst of society by their Master expressly that they may become 'the salt of the earth,' any right to shrink from their responsibilities as citizens, on the pretence of guarding their own spirituality from danger? Was it ever intended that, in a world abounding with evil which can be vanquished only by the power of Christian influence as revealed through personal character and exertion, those who profess to have received into their hearts the principle of a higher and purer life should abandon the government of society to the uncontrolled dominion of what they are apt enough to designate a sordid worldly ambition, while *they* seclude themselves in an artificial circle of sanctity, nursing their own religious emotions, and

'Pampering the coward heart
With feelings all too delicate for use?'

Do not the past history and present condition of the United States press such questions as these with solemn emphasis on the attention of Christian men everywhere?

Joseph Sturge, at any rate, with a courageous loyalty to conscience from which he never shrank, bravely did his duty as respects all the classes with whom he was brought into contact in America. To the slave-trader at Baltimore, whose establishment he had visited, he wrote a letter of faithful Christian admonition, in which he besought him, 'by his hopes of peace here and hereafter,' to abandon his occupation. 'I need not say,' he remarks, 'that my feelings were painfully exercised in looking over thy buildings, fitted up with bolts and

bars, for the reception of human beings for sale. A sense of the misery and suffering of the unfortunate slaves who have been from time to time confined there—of their separation from home and kindred—and of the dreary prospect before them of a life of unrequited toil in the South and South-west, rested heavily upon me. I could there realise the true nature of the system of slavery. I was in a market-house for human flesh, where humanity is degraded to a level with the brute, and where children of our common Father in Heaven, and for whom our blessed Redeemer offered up the atoning sacrifice of His blood, were bargained for and sold like beasts that perish. . . . I would beseech thee,' he says in conclusion, 'to listen to that voice which I am persuaded sometimes urges thee to "put away the evil of thy doings," to "do justice and love mercy," and *thus* cease to draw upon thyself the curse of those merchants of Tyre who "traded in the persons of men."

He was also the bearer of an address, signed by the venerable Thomas Clarkson, from the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to the President of the United States. He was desirous of presenting this in person; but he found, on inquiry, that it would be very difficult to obtain an audience for the purpose, as no member of Congress appeared willing to undertake the unpopular service of introducing the bearer of such a document. He therefore wrote a letter to the President, informing him that he had this address in charge, and asking permission to wait upon him and place it in his hands. To this no reply was received, nor did the President make the slightest allusion to it when Mr. Sturge was subsequently introduced to him. He had no mind, however, to be balked of his object by

this discourtesy. He therefore drew up a paper, addressed 'To the Abolitionists of the United States,' in which, while giving a copy of the address, he described the attempt he had vainly made to bring it under the cognisance of the Chief Officer of the Republic, adding quietly, that 'memorials of a similar character had been presented to different heads of governments in other parts of the world, and had been uniformly received with marked respect.' He expatiated also at some length, and with deep feeling, upon the sorrowful scenes he had witnessed in the district of Columbia, under the very shadow of the capitol—the slave-trading establishments where human beings, walled in as in a jail, 'herded together like cattle for the market;' and the city prison, built and maintained by the Federal government, 'an old and loathsome building,' crowded with coloured prisoners, some of them guilty of no offence, but placed in those cells because the slave-dealers found it convenient to make use of them as a place of deposit and market for their slaves. Copies of this paper were sent to the President, and to each member of the Senate and House of Representatives. It was extensively republished in the newspapers, North and South, anti-slavery and pro-slavery, and brought down upon its author a plentiful share of abuse. It is probable that it produced a considerable impression upon the minds of many. There was, at any rate, a curious illustration afforded in an article which appeared in the 'New York Herald' (then, as ever, the faithful watch-dog of slavery) of the alarm which his presence and supposed influence at Washington inspired in the pro-slavery ranks. It happened that while he was in that city the question of what was called the 'Gag law' was discussed in Congress; that is, a rule adopted by

the House of Representatives, by which petitions for the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia were laid upon the table without being read or referred to, which was tantamount to their rejection. Mr. Sturge had the pleasure of witnessing the brave struggles of the venerable John Quincy Adams to prevent the re-enactment of this rule, in which he happily succeeded. Whereupon the 'New York Herald' proclaimed: 'Joseph Sturge is now at Washington, using every means in his power to procure the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia. It was principally through his sinister influence that the decision in the House of Representatives, the other day, resulted in favour of the abolitionists; and what he may effect before he gets through with his schemes there, it is impossible to say. Let the Southern delegation in Congress look after this Sturge.'

Mr. Sturge felt it right, moreover, to publish a respectful but honest appeal to the members of the Society of Friends in the States, beseeching them not to allow themselves to be deterred by sectarian scruples and restraints from entering heartily into the movement going on around them on behalf of the oppressed. Adverting to the objection he found current in Quakerly circles, he says:—

'If this good cause be really endangered by popular excitement and the indiscretion of its imprudent advocates the obligation of consistent Friends to be found at their posts, faithfully maintaining the testimony of truth on its behalf, is greatly increased; and it is under such circumstances that I think I have seen the peculiar advantage and protection to our young Friends in England, of having their elder brethren with them, aiding them by their sympathy, as well as by their advice and counsel. I am persuaded that those

who are called to occupy the foremost ranks in society cannot be too careful not to impose a burden upon tender consciences by discouraging, either directly or indirectly, a course of conduct which is sanctioned by the precepts and examples of our Divine Master, lest they alienate from us some of His disciples, and thereby greatly injure the Society they are so laudably anxious to "keep unspotted from the world."

At the time when Mr. Sturge visited America, there existed, unhappily, among the abolitionists of that country serious divisions, which greatly impaired their power for good, and which were not always marked by the same manly Christian forbearance as had restrained similar differences of opinion in England. Among other evil effects of these feuds, not the least was this—that they afforded a ready excuse to a large class of religious persons, who, in a conflict between conscience and a prudential regard to their own interest and ease, eagerly seized on any pretext for siding with the latter and for holding aloof from the Anti-Slavery Societies. They were glad therefore of the plea that the internal dissensions which prevailed in the ranks of the abolitionists proved that they consisted of turbulent men, association with whom was neither pleasant nor profitable.

This state of things was a great grief to Mr. Sturge, and he did his utmost in social converse with the leaders of various parties to allay the ill-feeling between them that sometimes ran high, and to persuade them, if they could not unite in one organisation, to pursue their several courses without assailing each other, and thus betraying their weakness to the common foe, against whom their united strength was at that time feeble enough.

It is impossible, of course, accurately to estimate

what amount of good was produced by his visit to America, for that subtle force which we call influence is of all other things the most difficult to measure and weigh. It is certain, however, that his friends in that country believed it to have been largely beneficial. Mr. Lewis Tappan, writing to him when he was on the eve of embarking on his return to Europe, says:—

‘It would be wholly out of my power to convey to you the sense I have of the value of your services and counsels during your present visit to this country. I have no doubt this visit—your interviews, conversations, letters, &c., have done incalculable good, and have endeared you to many in this country, who will feel it to be a happiness and a privilege to follow you hereafter with their good wishes and their prayers. May the Lord abundantly reward you for this labour of love, and take you “on eagle’s wings” to your home again, there to labour for many years in the cause of abolition and general philanthropy.’

Mr. Whittier also refers repeatedly in his after communications to the impression which he left upon his own religious body. We subjoin a few extracts from his letters. Thus, writing from Philadelphia while Mr. Sturge was yet in the country, he says:—

‘Thy visits and labours have done great good; prejudices have been softened, attention aroused, and deep feeling called out in many minds. . . . I have been among some of our Friends to-day, and have been pleased to find the impression in regard to thyself and thy labours so highly favourable. The iron is beginning to melt.’

Again, in the first letter Whittier wrote to him after his return to England, dated ‘Amesbury, Aug. 29, 1841,’ he says:—

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—It seems, indeed, a long time since we parted with each other on board the steamship at Boston, and I hope and trust that long ere this thou hast been

restored to the society of thy friends on the other side of the water. I almost felt alone on parting with thee, especially when I looked around on our own Society, and saw coldness and ill-disguised opposition so generally apparent. But I am more and more assured that thy coming was in the way of truth and duty, and that its fruits will be made manifest ere long, even in our Society. Thy letter [to Friends] has been pretty generally circulated, and, as far as I can learn, has been received by all candid minds with satisfaction. Some, indeed, are opposed to it, and speak harshly, but the majority keep an "expressive silence." . . . Yesterday I received a letter from an active and influential Friend in New Hampshire. He says "Joseph Sturge's letter is admirable—gentle, yet pointed, and baptized in a workmanlike spirit. We think of having a thousand copies printed in a pamphlet form."

Two or three months later, he writes again :—

'Thy letter to Friends is doing quietly a good work. Some of our *hardest* have been softened by it. A member of Dover N. H. quarterly meeting, a magistrate and a man of some note in other societies as well as ours, who has been bitterly and actively hostile to us, has read thy letter, and says he cannot but unite with it, and that its doctrines and advice are sound. . . . The first-fruits of thy labours in Philadelphia begin to appear. Thomas Evans writes me under date of the 23rd thus:—"In the Meeting for Sufferings I have not been inactive, and a committee is now under appointment to procure information respecting slavery and the slave-trade in the State of Delaware, with a view of presenting at its next session a memorial against these crying sins." Now is not this encouraging? He speaks of thee with much affection. "Joseph's visit," he says, "was a very pleasant one to me." The conclusion of his letter is so beautiful and characteristic that I cannot forbear copying it:—"Amidst all the darkness which has covered our horizon on the awful subject of the negro's wrongs, I feel a settled conviction that a brighter day has already begun to dawn. The grey twilight of the morning is indeed faint, but it is the harbinger of the meridian day. Let

us not, then, be discouraged, but labour on with the meekness and wisdom, yet with the holy firmness inspired by the spirit of the Gospel.'

On January 31, 1842, Mr. Whittier writes again :—

'I send thee the "New York Herald" of last week, containing the debate in Congress on the presentation of a petition from some persons advising a peaceful dissolution of the Union. This was taking the blustering Southerners at their word, as they have all along been threatening to dissolve the Union. . . . Thou wilt see that thy name is pretty freely used in the debate. Lord Morpeth was present during the discussion.'

His own modest estimate of the effects of his visit may be seen by the following extract from a letter which he wrote to his friend, Mr. Thomas Harvey, immediately on his arrival in England :—

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—Thou wilt be pleased to hear that I arrived safe at Liverpool after a quick passage by the Caledonia steamer, viâ Boston and Halifax. I have to apologise to thee for not answering, as I intended, thy kind letter, but I found my time so very closely occupied while in America, that I was obliged to give up writing all letters but what appeared absolutely needful. I can hardly tell if my visit has been of any service to our cause, but if I may measure its value either by the abuse of the pro-slavery press there, or by the alarm and uneasiness of some Friends who are opposed to all abolition action in our Society, I may hope some little good will result. About the most I have reason to hope for is, perhaps, that the members of our Society, who wish individually to act, will have less obstruction thrown in their way; and I trust, also, the sincere abolitionists will in future waste less of their strength in complaining of each other. There is much to encourage in reference to the cause in America. In the Northern States it is evidently making much progress, notwithstanding that the organised Anti-slavery effort has been so long paralysed. . . .

'Very sincerely and affectionately thy friend,

'JOSEPH STURGE.'

Among the papers which Mr. Lewis Tappan kindly sent for the use of the biographer, there are several containing records of liberal donations which Mr. Sturge made towards the Anti-slavery cause while in America, the last of which was the following, written on the eve of his embarkation for England, and left as a parting legacy in the hands of his friend :—

‘Joseph Sturge places at the disposal of his friend Lewis Tappan the sum of 1,000 dollars, or any portion thereof for the promotion of Anti-slavery objects, provided that Lewis Tappan draws for the same as he may require it, any time within twelve-months of the date hereof.

‘ JOSEPH STURGE.

‘New York: 7th month, 22nd, 1841.

To another of these documents, containing instructions for the distribution of several large sums, are attached the following words: ‘The gifts to be paid with the express condition that they be acknowledged as from “A Friend,” and not in Joseph Sturge’s name.’ But surely we may hold that death has now repealed this modest interdict, and left us at liberty to avail ourselves of this chance revelation of one among a multitude of such generous benefactions which ran along the whole line of his life, in which, while his hand was ‘open as day to melting charity,’ he was careful not to let his left hand know what his right hand did.

In his letters to his sister, from which we have quoted, Mr. Sturge refers to a visit he paid to Dr. Channing. There was much to attract these two strongly to each other; the same simplicity of character, the same tenderness of heart, the same sense of the sacred responsibilities of life, and the same warm interest in the condition of the humble and down-trodden. The hour that they spent together seems to have been one of

earnest and solemn communion, consecrated by the word of God and prayer. We must own that the image of the Evangelical Quaker and the Unitarian minister, rising above all distinctions of theological creed, while their souls mingled in prayer on behalf of those that are desolate and oppressed, is one on which we love to dwell. It seems to have deeply impressed Mr. Whittier, who was present, for he has commemorated this interview in a beautiful poem on the death of Dr. Channing, from which we quote a few stanzas :

'By Narragansett's sunny bay,
Beneath his green embowering wood,
To me it seems but yesterday
Since at his side I stood.

The slopes lay green with summer rains,
The western wind blew fresh and free,
And glimmered down the orchard lanes
The white surf of the sea.

With us was one who, calm and true,
Life's highest purpose understood ;
And, like his blessed Master, knew
The joy of doing good.

Unlearned, unknown to lettered fame,
Yet on the lips of England's poor,
And toiling millions, dwelt his name
With blessings evermore.

Unknown to power or place, yet where
The sun looks o'er the Carib sea
It blended with the freeman's prayer
A song of jubilee.

No bars of sect or clime were felt—
The Babel strife of tongues had ceased—
And at one common altar knelt
The Quaker and the Priest.

And not in vain ; with strength renewed,
And zeal refreshed, and hope less dim,
For that brief meeting, each pursued
The path allotted him.'

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